



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

INFORMATION PAPER

NACC/WG/10 — IP/07
05/09/25

Tenth North American, Central American and Caribbean Working Group Meeting (NACC/WG/10)
Tulum, Mexico, from 8 to 12 September 2025

Agenda Item 5: NACC/WG Collaborative Task Forces Working Session

FAA Response to ICAO request: Sharing Contingency Routes and Use of Routes without Surveillance and Communication Capabilities

(Presented by United States)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has demonstrated a commitment with our international partners to ensure the continuity of services and the safety of aviation procedures during contingency operations. This Information Paper provides the FAA's response to ICAO NACC regarding the sharing of contingency routes, and use of contingency routes without surveillance and communication capabilities during past GREPECAS and NAM/CAR/CONT meetings.

Strategic Objectives:

- Safety
- Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency

References:

- Conclusion 13/68 of the Final Report of the 13th Meeting of the CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS/13)
- ICAO NAM/CAR/CONT 2 Report
- ICAO NAM/CAR/CONT 3 Report
- ICAO NAM/CAR CONT 4 Report
- ICAO NAM/CAR CONT 5 Report

1. Introduction

1.1 During the 13th meeting of GREPECAS, the meeting agreed to Conclusion 13/68, ATM CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR THE CAR/SAM REGIONS, which stated that the CAR/SAM States/Territories:

- a) Develop their ATM contingency plans for their airspace under their jurisdiction;
- b) Establish bilateral or multi-lateral agreements with the States/Territories/International Organizations responsible for the adjacent airspace, in coordination with the ICAO Regional Offices, in order to develop an ATM Contingency Plan, using the guidance in Appendix AO to this part of the Report; and
- c) Send to the corresponding ICAO Regional Office a copy of their ATM Contingency Plan

1.2 In response to the above Conclusion, the FAA has -for many years- complied with a) however, internal FAA policies have limited our ability to fully comply with actions b) and c).

2. Discussion

2.1 During NAM/CAR/CONT/2, some States shared that a lack of adequate planning and implementation of contingency procedures by (and among) regional ANSPs was the main impediment to providing harmonized ATC responses to emergency situations for several States/Territories and Service Providers in the CAR Region.

2.2 During NAM/CAR/CONT/3 some States emphasized the challenges they face with the use of contingency routes where no surveillance and communication services are being provided. Since the use of these routes need to be agreed upon by the ANSPs that will utilize these routes, Letter of Agreement (LOAs) will be needed to document the approval of all ANSPs involved. Most States/Territories in the CAR Region that have used contingency routes where no surveillance and communication services were available have established an ATS contingency routes scheme to be used in the case of total disruption of ATS, resulting in operators navigating through the affected airspace without ATS surveillance or two-way communications. This ATS contingency routes scheme requires coordination with adjacent ATS units and is normally reflected in bilateral LOAs.

2.3 During NAM/CAR/CONT/4, some States expressed difficulties in harmonizing their contingency plans, as well as the lack of awareness of the contingency plans of adjacent Area Control Centers (ACCs).

2.4 During NAM/CAR/CONT/5 participants, including the ICAO Secretariat, emphasized the need for a greater commitment from States to harmonize contingency plans, share safety-related information, and update LOAs accordingly.

2.5 During each of the previous CONT meetings, the FAA committed and recommitted to reviewing all its Operational Contingency Plan (OCPs) and LOAs which contained contingency procedures. The goal has always been to ensure support facility procedures were clear and did not include non-surveillance routes that also lacked communication capabilities

3. Update

3.1 After completing the previously mentioned review of our OCPs and LOAs which contained OCPs, and thorough and comprehensive internal collaboration regarding ICAO's request to develop contingency routes that will redirect aircraft around affected airspace, as well as being able to share these routes in advance, we are pleased to report that the FAA will be updating its existing policy (JO 1900.47H, Air Traffic Control Operational Readiness and Contingency Planning) to include operational contingency procedures in section 3.2 below.

3.2 The FAA is reinforcing its commitment to our international partners to ensure the continuity of services using safe and orderly procedures during contingency operations. To further this effort, while meeting regulatory requirements and customer needs, the FAA has determined the following:

3.2.1 All FAA Air Traffic Control Centers that are adjacent to international Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) Air Traffic Control facilities will collaborate with those adjacent facilities, and any support facilities, to develop contingency routes that will redirect aircraft around the affected airspace when they declare an Operational Contingency Level (ATC-Limited or ATC-Zero).

a. These routes must be shared with all adjacent ANSPs to ensure strategic actions can be taken when an FAA facility is affected by a contingency event.

b. All procedures must be formally documented in an LOA and included in their OCP.

3.2.2 All FAA Air Traffic Facilities must consider surveillance (radar, etc.) contingency routes and procedures before use of non-radar routes. Where no viable surveillance alternatives are available, non-radar must only be used when facility procedures and training are established, available, and completed. FAA Air Traffic facilities must not use or support contingency routes that do not have viable surveillance and acceptable/approved level of communication with ATC.

3.2.3. If a neighboring international ANSP includes these types of routes in support of their contingency operations, then FAA facilities must adhere to these standards and collaborate to develop viable options in support of any agreements.

3.3 While this policy update is pending, it should be noted that nothing in our current policy prohibits FAA ATC facilities from starting this type of coordination or sharing their contingency information with relevant stakeholders, if requested.

4. Conclusion

4.1 As previously mentioned, these operational contingency procedures will be incorporated into an existing FAA policy to ensure facilities collaborate with their foreign partners in the development of these routes. It is our hope that this will allow us to strengthen our regional collaboration with ICAO and member States in the CAR/SAM region.

5. Recommendation

- a) the Meeting is invited to note the contents of this Paper

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