



**Issued: 22 August 2016**

## **Conformance with Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM) Restrictions**

**This Information Notice contains information that is for guidance and/or awareness.**

Recipients are asked to ensure that this Information Notice is copied to all members of their staff who may have an interest in the information (including any 'in-house' or contracted maintenance organisations and relevant outside contractors).

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Applicability:</b>                 |   |
| <b>Aerodromes:</b>                    | All Aerodrome Operators                     |
| <b>Air Traffic:</b>                   | All ATS                                     |
| <b>Airspace:</b>                      | All NATMAC Representatives                  |
| <b>Airworthiness:</b>                 | Not primarily affected                      |
| <b>Flight Operations:</b>             | All AOC Holders and General Aviation Pilots |
| <b>Licensed/Unlicensed Personnel:</b> | Not primarily affected                      |

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM) is a service established with the objective of contributing to a safe and expeditious flow of traffic by ensuring that capacity is utilised to the maximum extent possible and the traffic volume is compatible with the capacities declared by the appropriate ATC authority. The Eurocontrol Network Manager Directorate (NMD) provides this service in conjunction with Flow Management Positions (FMPs) established at each Area Control Centre (ACC). The emphasis for ATFM measures is changing from regulation (delaying aircraft on the ground) towards capacity management. Only when no other option is available will a regulation be applied and delays issued (Slot Allocation). In this case a Calculated Take Off Time (CTOT) will be issued by NMD. All requirements for ATFM measures of any kind will be coordinated through the UK FMP (NATS, Swanwick) otherwise referred to as the Local ATFM Unit. Common rules on ATFM are laid down in European Commission Regulation (EU) No. 255/2010.
- 1.2 Recently there has been evidence that certain airspace users, in particular the business jet community, are increasingly ignoring ATFM measures or are using unacceptable methods to attempt to by-pass them. The intention of this Information Notice (IN) is to remind all stakeholders of some of their obligations with regard to ATFM and flight planning.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 Operators are reminded about the following rules for ATFM as laid down in EU Regulation No. 255/2010 and the NMD Operations Handbook:
- For flights likely to be subject to ATFM measures Aircraft Operators shall submit flight plans to the Integrated Initial Flight Plan Processing System (IFPS) at least three hours before the Estimated Off Blocks Time (EOBT). Operators filing flight plans for flights within the NMD ATFM area or from adjacent areas and entering the NMD ATFM area shall assume their flight is subject to ATFM measures and therefore subject to the requirement to submit a flight plan at least three hours before EOBT.
  - Each intended flight shall be covered by a single flight plan and the filed flight plan shall correctly reflect the intended flight profile.
  - All relevant ATFM measures and changes thereto shall be incorporated into the planned flight operation and communicated to the pilot. In the case of a CTOT being issued there is a tolerance of -5/+10 minutes and all pilots are to ensure that they comply with this requirement. If they cannot then a new CTOT must be requested.
- 2.2 To conform to the rules above, IFR flight plans shall be submitted before departure. If, subsequently, a pilot submits an Air Filed Flight Plan (AFIL) this constitutes submitting multiple flight plans for a particular flight and is therefore in contradiction of EU Regulation No. 255/2010. If there is a genuine reason for altering a flight plan during the course of the associated flight (e.g. emergency, the need for weather avoidance etc) an ATC Flight Plan Proposal (AFP) can be submitted by an ATC centre to IFPS following a request from the pilot.
- 2.3 Also, to conform to the rules above it is not acceptable to file a flight plan with a destination that is not actually the intended one in order to by-pass a possible ATFM Regulation and then request a change of destination in-flight. This practice can, and recently has, resulted in ATC overloads.
- 2.4 The UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is currently implementing formal procedures to ensure that it meets the General Obligations of Member States as laid down in EU Regulation No. 255/2010. These procedures will be used as the basis for compliance monitoring and formal audits and will include assurance that ATS Units, operators and aerodromes meet all their obligations with regard to ATFM. As part of this NATS, in their role as the UK FMP, will be monitoring the response to ATC flow and capacity restrictions and will supply information to the CAA on all pilots who have either ignored or attempted to circumvent such restrictions. All contradictions of the rules laid down in EU Regulation No. 255/2010 will be reported to the European Commission in an Annual Report on ATFM and may be subject to sanctions imposed by the UK.
- 2.5 If compliance with ATFM measures continues to deteriorate the CAA will consider the re-introduction of the ad-hoc airport slot allocation process used during the 2012 London Olympic Games for business jet operations into aerodromes that are currently not category 3 coordinated airports during certain nominated busy periods. In the meantime NATS is trialling the use of a Business Jet Coordinator in the FMP who will be able to supply information regarding likely ATFM measures to pilots before they file their flight plans. This will be in place for potentially busy periods throughout the year as identified by NATS.

### **3 Queries**

- 3.1 Any general queries or further guidance required as a result of this communication should be addressed to:

Airspace Regulation  
Safety and Airspace Regulation Group  
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London  
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### **4 Cancellation**

- 4.1 This Information Notice will remain in force until further notice.