

AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR W 084/2022

UNITED KINGDOM



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Subject

Administrative



DIVERSION REQUESTS IN UNITED KINGDOM (UK) AIRSPACE

1 AIM

To provide clarity to crews and operators on the responses by UK Airports to tactical diversion request for circumstances other than a "PAN" or "MAYDAY" call.

2 Introduction

Airports across the whole of the United Kingdom are predominantly independently owned meaning each have their own processes for considering, accepting, or declining diversion requests.

Note: *It is important to note that any flight allocated a higher flight priority, such as a "PAN" or "MAYDAY", will automatically be accepted at any airport without challenge.*

3 Safety Notice

Crews and Operators making requests for a diversion aerodrome, with ATC on an operational frequency, will experience a time delay in receiving a response.

Requests via RTF generate an increase in frequency occupancy together with workload for the controller and the supporting ATC team. If there are multiple requests in close succession it results in an exponential increase in workload for all parties and a greater increase in decision times.

Any diversion request is passed by telephone to the selected aerodrome. This process takes time and will result in a delay of approximately 5 -10 minutes or sometimes more. The Aerodrome's response then needs to be passed by ATC to the crew via the operational frequency. This will increase the overall decision response time to any diversion request.

In the United Kingdom it is common for aerodromes to decline a diversion request. Aerodrome's will consider stand availability, ground handling capability, established relationship with the airline as well as their overall capacity at the point a diversion request is made. It is important to note that a diversion request is at an aerodrome's discretion so may result in it being declined.

Crews considering a diversion aerodrome should identify and request an aerodrome for which their Company has pre-arranged or agreed handling, together with facilities to accommodate their aircraft type. It is suggested that crews have several diversion aerodrome options in their planning to mitigate the possibility that their initial or preferred request(s) are declined.

4 "FUEL PAN" phraseology is not recognised when protecting Final Reserve Fuel. Crews should expect ATC to seek clarity following a "FUEL PAN" declaration. This will be done by ATC request confirmation of "MINIMUM FUEL" or a "FUEL MAYDAY".

Note: *A "MINIMUM FUEL" call will not award a flight an increase in priority and will result in ATC confirming arrival delay for their destination aerodrome.*

Following consecutive diversion requests being declined crews should consider an escalation of flight priority to ensure they can land safely at a suitable aerodrome whilst protecting Final Reserve Fuel.

5 Review

This guidance will be reviewed following any change of UK Regulations or Policies in accommodating diversion requests together with amendments of Airport processes.

6 Supporting Documentation Extract:

UK Civil Aviation Authority Safety Notice Number: SN-2019/002
Version 2 issued 13th March 2019.

Appendix 1

Protecting Final Reserve Fuel
<p>1) REQUEST DELAY INFORMATION FROM ATC</p> <p>When unanticipated circumstances may result in landing at the destination aerodrome with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) less than final reserve fuel, plus fuel required to proceed to an alternate aerodrome; orb) the fuel required to operate to an isolated aerodrome. <p>Example ATC responses: "NO TRAFFIC DELAY EXPECTED / DELAY LESS THAN [NUMBER] MINUTES, EXPECT [NUMBER] HOLDING PATTERNS / EXPECTED APPROACH TIME [TIME] / DELAY NOT DETERMINED [REASON FOR THE DELAY]"</p> <p><i>Note: Pilots should use this delay information to determine if a diversion is required.</i></p>
<p>2) DECLARE MINIMUM FUEL: "[CALLSIGN], MINIMUM FUEL"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) when committed to land at a specific aerodrome*; andb) any change to the existing clearance to that aerodrome* may result in landing with less than the planned final reserve fuel. <p><i>Note: Do not expect priority. This is not an emergency situation but an indication that an emergency situation is possible should any additional delay occur.</i></p> <p>Example ATC responses: "ROGER, NO TRAFFIC DELAY EXPECTED / EXPECT [NUMBER] MINUTES DELAY / [NUMBER] MILES FROM TOUCHDOWN"</p> <p><i>Note: Pilots should use this delay information to determine if a fuel emergency should be declared.</i></p>
<p>3) DECLARE A FUEL EMERGENCY: "MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY FUEL..."</p> <p>When the calculated usable fuel predicted to be available upon landing at the nearest aerodrome* where a safe landing can be made is less than the planned final reserve fuel.</p> <p>ATC Response: Subsequent ATC action shall be based on the intentions of the pilot and the overall traffic situation.</p>

* landing site - in the case of helicopter.