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DATALINK PRE-DEPARTURE ATC CLEARANCE (DCL) AT SPECIFIED AERODROMES

1 Background

1.1 NATS Limited has introduced Electronic Flight Data Display Systems at some of the airports where it provides Air Traffic Services. Datalink pre-departure clearances may be requested, subject to the conditions below, where DCL is published as available in the UK AIP.

1.2 The system allows suitably equipped aircraft to request and then receive their ATC departure clearance via datalink.

2 Requirements

2.1 The message must be routed via either SITA or ARINC and comply with ARINC specification 623-2 and the Eurocae specification ED 85-A.

2.2 The crew must have received training in the use of their equipment for requesting and handling datalink clearances. NATS Limited has been working for some time to eradicate voice communication errors and does not wish to introduce datalink as a new source of error.

3 Procedure

3.1 Data Link Departure Clearance may be requested from EOBT -25 minutes until EOBT +10 minutes. The request will be processed by the same controller that is also carrying out the voice clearances and will normally be returned to the aircraft within a short period of time. Once a clearance has been requested, one member of crew should remain available to acknowledge the returned clearance; if receipt of the clearance has not been acknowledged within 5 minutes, the system will consider an error has occurred. Under these circumstances, or when any messaging error occurs, a message requiring the crew to 'revert to voice' will be sent and the datalink clearance cancelled.

3.2 No further pilot or system generated departure datalink requests should be made once a successful clearance has been received. The system cannot be used for re-clearance or checking for any updates nor can ATC respond via datalink to any additional information added in the remarks field.

3.3 Once the aircraft is ready to depart, voice contact should be established stating:

- (a) 'With datalink clearance';
- (b) The aircraft type including series (eg B737 800, A340 600);
- (c) QNH.

3.4 Should problems be experienced with the use of DCL, contact should be made with the ATC Operations department at the airport concerned. Discussion on the RTF should be avoided. Information required to assist in the investigation is Callsign, Aircraft type and Registration, Departure Airport, Destination, and Time (UTC). Comment must be received within 30 days and if possible should include any print out from the flight.

This Circular is issued for information, guidance and necessary action.