

AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR Y 2/2014

UNITED KINGDOM



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Subject

Operational



EXEMPTIONS FROM AIR TRAFFIC FLOW MANAGEMENT RESTRICTIONS

1 Introduction

- 1.1 It is possible for Flight Plan (FPL) originators to obtain exemptions from Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM) restrictions for certain categories of flights through the use of STS/ indicators in Field 18 of the FPL.
- 1.2 However, inappropriate use of the STS/ indicators can result in unwarranted penalties, both financial and in terms of time delay, on other airspace users. The aim of this AIC is to re-emphasise the procedures for using STS/ indicators in the UK. The following principles apply:
- (a) The insertion of a STS/ indicator in Field 18 of the FPL identifies that a flight may require special handling. This indicator is for use by all parties that may have to handle the flight;
 - (b) The current list of STS/ indicators recognised for ATFM purposes comprises STS/HEAD; STS/SAR; STS/MEDEVAC; STS/FFR; STS/STATE; STS/HUM; STS/HOSP;
 - (c) Additionally, STS/ATFMX may be used if that particular flight has received specific approval from the office established by the National Administration for processing such requests.
- 1.3 It should be noted that:
- (a) Only STS/HEAD; STS/SAR; STS/MEDEVAC STS/FFR and STS/ATFMX qualify for automatic exemption from ATFM measures;
 - (b) The indicator STS/ATFMX is only used for ATFM purposes and is additional to any other special handling notification that may be required to be shown for ATS purposes as STS/... in Field 18 of the FPL.
- 1.4 Further information on the use of STS/ indicators for ATFM purposes can be found in the ATFM Users Manual published by the Network Manager (NM), accessible via the Eurocontrol website.

2 Rules of Application for the use of STS/ATFMX

- 2.1 The following Rules of Application shall be applicable to all flights seeking to gain exemption from ATFM measures within the area of responsibility of the NM. They are intended to ensure that flights, which by the nature of their mission cannot under any circumstances be delayed as a result of ATFM, are exempt from such measures as far as is practicable. They are based on ICAO guidelines and existing material in the Network Operations Handbook.
- 2.2 It should be noted by all users that any flight that is granted an exemption, and which may otherwise have been delayed, may have that delay passed on to other flights. It is essential, therefore, that the use of the exemption facility shall be properly controlled and monitored so that genuine flight priorities can continue to operate without ATFM delay.
- 2.3 **Rules of Application**
- 2.3.1 The Rules of Application are implemented and apply to all flights operating within the notified NM area of responsibility that require exemption from ATFM measures.
- 2.3.2 Any flight meeting the criteria established to warrant exemption status may, provided the necessary approval process has been followed and the flight duly authorised by the Office established by the National Administration for processing such requests, use STS/ATFMX for that flight only. **Operators are to ensure that requests for exemption are only submitted for flights that satisfy the criteria detailed below.**
- 2.3.3 Each segment of a flight shall require a specific approval to use STS/ATFMX.

3 Criteria to be Satisfied when Applying for the use of STS/ATFMX

- 3.1 **STS/HOSP or STS/HUM**
- 3.1.1 The NM criteria allow ATFM exemption for flights where the safety of human life is involved, i.e. if the flight does not operate without delay a human life or lives may be lost. Such flights require specific medical/UNHCR authorisation to support the request.

- 3.1.2 Following consultation with UK Air Ambulance operators, the CAA has determined that the term 'safety of human life' is not always easy to define and there are other urgent medical flights that may also require to operate without delay. Such flights include the carriage of patients with the threat of loss of limbs, transfer of human organs and the transportation of medical teams. The NM has advised that, as a general rule, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) scale should be used to determine the need for exemption from ATFM measures. Flights that are categorised as NACA V (acute critical condition) or NACA VI (resuscitation) will always qualify for approval to use STS/ATFMX. Flights that are categorised as NACA IV (possibly life threatening) will not normally be expected to use STS/ATFMX. However, should such a flight receive an ATFM delay that the accompanying medical personnel consider would jeopardise the patient's ability to recover, the NM Central Flow Help Desk should be contacted where every effort will be made to reduce any delay to a minimum.
- 3.1.3 Ultimately it is the responsibility of the medical teams treating the patient to determine the severity of the condition in accordance with the NACA scale as accurately as possible so that only bona fide applications for the use of STS/ATFMX are submitted and the requisite medical evidence will be expected to accompany the application.
- 3.1.4 **Positioning Flights** - The following criteria apply to positioning flights:
- A flight positioning to an aerodrome to collect a patient categorised as NACA V or NACA VI and doing an immediate turnaround with the patient on board to return qualifies for approval for the use of STS/ATFMX. The same applies to time-critical transits for the collection of organs for transfer;
 - A flight conducting a long positioning sector or sectors that might involve a re-fuelling stop and where any significant delay could have implications for crew flight time limitations (FTL), will be considered for approval to use STS/ATFMX;
 - **Routine positioning flights, e.g. a flight to an airport to collect a patient some time after arrival, do not qualify for the use of STS/ATFMX. In particular flights positioning back to their home base to return to being 'on call' do not qualify for approval and requests must not be submitted for such flights. However, if proof of a subsequent time critical task can be produced the use of STS/ATFMX may be considered.**
- 3.1.5 If the flight fulfils the requirements, as stated above, an application may be made for approval to use STS/ATFMX in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph 4 of this Circular.
- 3.2 **STS/STATE**
- 3.2.1 The NM guidelines recommend that ATFM exemption may only be approved for flights if the person or persons on board a flight on State business are of such importance that the flight cannot accept any delay. Additionally, approval may be given if the mission of the flight is being carried out by, or on behalf of, the State and is of such importance that any delay will jeopardise the success of the mission.
- 3.2.2 If the flight fulfils the requirements, as stated above, an application may be made for approval to use STS/ATFMX in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph 4 of this Circular.
- 3.3 **Flight Priority**
- 3.3.1 It should be noted that the use of STS/ATFMX does not in itself afford the flight any additional flight priority status for special handling by ATS. It is the other STS/ indicators that indicate the need for special handling by ATS.
- 3.3.2 A STS/STATE flight may be afforded appropriate UK ATS handling priority because of the importance of the mission, or the person(s) on board.
- 3.3.3 The combined use of STS/HOSP and STS/ATFMX will indicate to ATS that the flight is required to operate without delay and so justify exemption from ATFM measures. Such flights may be afforded additional priority that the traffic situation allows.
- 3.3.4 Non-urgent flights will continue to use STS/HOSP, indicating that special handling is required. Additional information may be included in Field 18 of the FPL using RMK/ or the pilot may advise ATS exactly what special handling is required
- 3.3.5 If any STS/HOSP flight experiences a medical emergency in flight the appropriate radiotelephony message(s) should be used to communicate the urgency of the situation to ATS.

4 UK Procedure for Requesting Authorisation for the use of STS/ATFMX 4.1 Introduction

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The UK has established two processes for the approval of certain qualifying flights to use STS/ATFMX. These processes apply only to flights departing from UK aerodromes. Flights operating into the UK and wishing to use STS/ATFMX must obtain approval from the national authority of the point of departure for the inbound leg. A separate approval must be obtained for any subsequent departure from the UK. The UK authorities cannot grant authorisation for any portion of a flight inbound to the UK and wishing to be exempt from ATFM measures.
- 4.1.2 A Manual Approval process applies to Aircraft Operators that make irregular flights and are able to provide prior notice for approval.
- 4.1.3 A Self Regulation Approval process applies to Aircraft Operators that are regularly engaged in Air Ambulance flights and, by the urgent nature of the flight, may not have sufficient time to undertake the Manual Approval process.

4.2 Manual Approval Process

- 4.2.1 The operator of a flight seeking an individual approval to insert the indicator STS/ATFMX in field 18 of a FPL for a departure from an aerodrome within the UK shall obtain prior permission from the relevant authority. The application should be submitted at least 24 hours but not more than 48 hours in advance of the flight.
- 4.2.2 Applications are to be made on the pro-forma at Appendix A to this Circular and must be forwarded with the appropriate supporting documentation.
- 4.2.3 Applications for approval for the use of STS/ATFMX, for STATE, HOSP and HUM flights, should normally be made to the Airspace Section of the Safety and Airspace Regulation (SARG) between the hours 0830-1630 (local time), Monday to Friday, excluding Public Holidays, as follows:

Phone: 020-7453 6599

Fax: 020-7453 6593

Email: ausops@caa.co.uk

- 4.2.4 Outside the hours notified in paragraph 4.2.3 above, applications relating to HOSP and HUM flights only should be made to the London FMP FLOLINE as follows:

Phone: 01489-588150

Fax: 01489-612437

4.3 **Self Regulation Approval Process**

- 4.3.1 In recognition of the specific requirements of Air Ambulance flights, the CAA has established a process by which an Aircraft operator can determine whether their own flights meet the requirements for ATFM exemption. Subject to compliance with a set of formal conditions, the CAA may grant a UK based Aircraft Operator an Approval to apply STS/ATFMX to specific flights meeting the conditions of the Approval. In exceptional circumstances such an approval may be granted to non-UK based operators and categories other than Air Ambulance flights for departures from UK aerodromes only.

- 4.3.2 Aircraft Operators wishing to apply for CAA Approval for Self Regulation should contact:

Post: Airspace Section, Safety and Airspace Regulation Group, CAA House, 45-59 Kingsway, London WC2B 6TE.

Fax: 020-7453 6565

Email: airspace@caa.co.uk

4.4 **Compliance Monitoring**

- 4.4.1 The NM provides the CAA with a list of all flights departing the UK using STS/ATFMX on a monthly basis. The CAA undertakes to verify that all such flights operated with an appropriate approval for ATFM exemption.

- 4.4.2 With regard to those Aircraft Operators that have been granted an Approval for Self Regulation, the CAA will, from time to time, conduct an audit of randomly selected flights and will require proof that the flights met the requirements of the NM and the conditions of the CAA Approval.

- 4.4.3 Additionally, the Aircraft Operator will be required to retain, and supply on demand, all appropriate documentation to support the use of STS/ATFMX.

5 **Action by ATS Providers**

- 5.1 It should be noted that the procedures detailed in this Circular are for ATC Flow Management purposes. The table of flight priorities for ATC purposes, detailed in MATS Part 1, is not affected.
- 5.2 ATS providers should ensure that FPL Reception Offices and ATC Units are aware of the procedures contained in this Circular.

Application for Approval of STS/ATFMX

This form only applies to flights that intend to use the STS/ indicator **STS/HOSP**, **STS/HUM** or **STS/STATE**. Applications for ATFM exemption must be transmitted to the approval authority, when practicable, not less than 24 hours and not more than 48 hours before the date of flight. Supporting documentation must accompany the application or be made available on request.

Flight Date		Aircraft Type	
R/T Callsign		Aircraft Registration	
From		ETD (UTC)	
To		ETA (UTC)	
STS indicator to be used (*delete as appropriate) HOSP * HUM * STATE *			

Application for STS/ATFMX:

Reason: (provide brief details)
Supporting Documentation provided: (provide brief details and attach copy(ies) as appropriate)

I hereby acknowledge and confirm that this application for exemption from ATFM measures conforms to the requirements of the NM procedure STS/ATFMX, as detailed in the Network Operations Handbook and UK AIC Y 1/2014.

Signed:	Name:
Aircraft Operator:	Date:
Fax No:	Telephone No:

Response from Approving Authority:

The application meets the requirements for exemption from ATFM measures and approval is given for the use of STS/ATFMX in Field 18 of the ICAO Flight Plan form. *

The application **does not meet** the requirements for granting STS/ATFMX. *

(* delete as appropriate)

Reason for refusal:	
Signed:	Name:
SARG, AIRSPACE / LFMP * (* delete as appropriate)	SARG, AIRSPACE / LFMP * (* delete as appropriate)