

POCKET REFERENCE FOR FLIGHT PLANNING IN THE U.S. NATIONAL AIRSPACE SYSTEM



FILING IFR FLIGHT PLANS

- File using the FAA/ICAO flight plan form
- File the equipment codes approved for the aircraft, the operator and the flight crew
- File a realistic departure time
- Submit your flight plan to your flight plan service provider as far in advance as possible – ideally by the night before or before 0700 ET. This allows you to become “known demand”
- Being known demand can help to minimize a delay, but submitting flight plans in advance **will not** prevent an Expect Departure Clearance Time (EDCT) from being issued
- Submitting a flight plan after an Airspace Flow Program (AFP) or Ground Delay Program (GDP) is issued makes the flight “pop-up traffic” and can significantly increase delays
- Understand the risks of filing an artificially early departure time (e.g., 30 minutes before scheduled departure time). You could get an EDCT that is before you are actually ready to depart
- Pilots should be proactive in verbally advising ATC that they are “CDR-capable” or “overwater capable” if properly equipped and applicable

HELPFUL WEB LINKS

General NAS Information

- FileSmart filesmart.org
- NBAA Traffic Flow Management (TFM) Resources nbaa.org/ops/airspace/
- NBAA TFM Glossary of Terms nbaa.org/ops/airspace/tfm/glossary/

Weather Impacts on Proposed Flight

- NOAA’s Aviation Weather Center Overview aviationweather.gov
- AWC’s Decision Support Tools: Winter Weather & Summer Weather Dashboard aviationweather.gov/decisionsupport
- Convection: Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) Convective Forecast Planning Guidance aviationweather.gov/convection
- NY TRACON (N90) Strategic Planning Aid (SPA) – Weather Planning, SWAP Implementation Planning weather.gov/zny/n90

Flight Planning & Route Selection

- Air Traffic Control System Command Center (ATCSCC) System Status fly.faa.gov/ois/
- ATCSCC Advisories Database fly.faa.gov/adv/advAdvisoryForm.jsp
- ATCSCC Current Reroutes fly.faa.gov/ratreader/jsp/index.jsp
- IFR Preferred Route or Coded Departure Routes (CDRs) fly.faa.gov/rmt/coded_departure_routes.jsp
- Active Special Use Airspace (remain clear by 3 NM) sua.faa.gov/sua
- Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) tfr.faa.gov/tfr2/list.html
- NBAA VIP TFR Impact Statements/Graphics: www.nbaa.org/vip-tfr
- NOTAMS notams.aim.faa.gov/notamSearch/
- Aircraft Equipment Codes www.nbaa.org/aircraft-equipment-codes

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ROUTE SELECTION

- File an IFR Preferred Route or a Coded Departure Route (CDR) that does not require coordination
- File required and recommended routes listed in ATCSCC Current Reroutes
- Obtain CDR computer flight plan and fuel requirements, and proactively advise ATC if you are “CDR-capable”
- File “direct routing” only in more sparsely populated areas of the U.S.
- Optimized routes are often not acceptable to ATC. They may be useful in planning the route between the preferred departure fixes (SIDs) and arrival fixes (STARs)
- If filing an RNAV capable, file RNAV SIDs and RNAV STARs – do not file a conventional SID or STAR
- Select an appropriate SID and transition. Exit the SID at the SID transition terminus
- Select an appropriate STAR and transition. Join the STAR at the start of the STAR transition

MY FLIGHT WAS ISSUED AN EDCT – NOW WHAT?

- Expect Departure Clearance Times (EDCTs) only come from Ground Delay Programs (GDPs) or Airspace Flow Programs (AFPs) – never from ground stops. If you are told that there is a ground stop and that you have an EDCT, ask questions
- Once you have an EDCT, do not re-file unless you are filing a “Route Out” option for an AFP – otherwise, the flight becomes a “pop-up.” Talk to your flight plan service provider for assistance
- Once you have an EDCT, do not re-file for required or recommended routes – let ATC assign these for you. But, be prepared to fly the required or recommended route (fuel appropriately and enter the route in the FMS)
- For delay reduction options, contact your flight plan service provider or, if subscribed, NBAA Air Traffic Services. There is no guarantee that delays can be reduced – each situation is different

I’M ENCOUNTERING DEPARTURE DELAYS - WHAT CAN I DO?

- Advise ATC that you are willing to use non-standard routes or altitudes:
 - Switch to different departure fix
 - Use low altitude airways
 - Use low altitude cruise until clear of constrained area
 - Plan and fuel accordingly
 - Be proactive and use phraseology similar to: “Can accept non-standard routing or non-standard altitudes”
- (If applicable) Request to ATC to use Overwater Routes (e.g., route over AZEZU west of Atlantic Warning Areas)
- Note that remarks in a flight plan are not always seen by controllers. Be politely proactive with your request
- If your delay is being driven by an airport issue at your destination (i.e., a ground stop or GDP), consider using an alternate airport. Note that this will not help you with AFP delays
- If your delay is being driven by an AFP, talk to your flight plan service provider about possible route-out options