

11 Novembre 2020

*(English text at the bottom)*

## LETTERA DI IFALPA AI SERVIZI DI INFORMAZIONI AERONAUTICHE RIGUARDANTE L'ECCESSIVO VOLUME DI NOTAMS ATTIVI

Gentili Colleghi,  
negli ultimi 10 anni si è registrato un significativo aumento nel volume dei NOTAMs pubblicati. Ciò ha determinato che tale volume spesso superi la capacità degli operatori (piloti e flight dispatchers) di leggere ed analizzare tali informazioni nel tempo a disposizione. IFALPA ha inviato una lettera agli uffici regionali ICAO per sollecitare i Servizi di Informazioni Aeronautiche di competenze ad affrontare la problematica. Alleghiamo di seguito la lettera in questione e la comunicazione inviata a tutte le associazioni membre.

Buona lettura.

ANPAC – Dipartimento Tecnico

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English Version

## IFALPA LETTER TO THE AIS COMMUNITY REGARDING THE EXCESSIVE VOLUME OF NOTAMS

Dear Colleagues,

within the last 10 years, there has been a significant increase in the volume of published NOTAMs which has led to a situation where the volume of NOTAMs overwhelms the capacity of the end users i.e. pilots and dispatch officers, to review and assess the information in a timely manner.

IFALPA has sent a letter to the ICAO Regional Offices for them to distribute to their AIS community to deal with this issue.

Here below the letter and the communication sent to all IFALPA member associations. Enjoy the reading.

ANPAC – Dipartimento Tecnico

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**ANPAC**  
Italy alpa



# The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations



22 September 2020

AIS Community

Dear Madam, Dear Sir;

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) is the global voice of pilots. An international not-for-profit organization, IFALPA represents over 100,000 airline pilots in nearly 100 countries. The mission of IFALPA is to promote the highest level of aviation safety worldwide.

On behalf of the global pilots represented by IFALPA, we are reaching out to you with deep concerns regarding aviation safety through information management and presentation, because we believe you play a crucial role in this matter.

NOTAMs (Notices to Airmen) contain information concerning the establishment, condition or change in any aeronautical facility, service, procedure or hazard, the timely knowledge of which is essential to personnel concerned with flight operations. Pilots depend on this information for the safe conduct of our operations and the safety of our passengers.

Within the last 10 years, there has been a significant increase in the volume of published NOTAMs which has led to a situation where the volume of NOTAMs overwhelms the capacity of the end users i.e. pilots and dispatch officers, to review and assess the information in a timely manner. This has resulted in several incidents where safety-critical information was missed. NOTAMs are supposed to support situational awareness but currently, they do the exact opposite. This simply cannot continue; it is unacceptable.

ICAO is working with all relevant stakeholders to design the future System Wide Information Management (SWIM) network and this should improve the NOTAM situation significantly. However, before the new system is in place, there needs to be a reduction of the burden caused by NOTAM proliferation by collaborating with different stakeholders and authorities.

One factor contributing to the increasing cumulative number of NOTAMs is authorizing the publication of NOTAMs which remain in effect in excess of 150 days. As per ICAO Annex 15, NOTAMs should be used only to promulgate information which is *essential* and *temporary* in nature. The widely accepted principle is that information published in NOTAMs should not be valid in excess of 90 days, but the validity can be extended up to 150 days. If the information is valid for this long, in most cases, the information is not of temporary nature, and it should be incorporated into AIPs (or other manuals) or at the very least, should be replaced by an AIP Supplement.

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# The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations



As these guidelines are regularly ignored, pilots and dispatch officers must, day after day, review the same NOTAMs in excess of 150 days and the volume increases every time an aerodrome adjacent to flown route is added. Pilots have a limited time during the pre-flight briefing (perhaps only 5 minutes) to review the numerous NOTAMs – which may exceed 30 pages on a typical 3-hour cross-continent flight.

Not only are there many NOTAMs, but also too many of them are lengthy and convoluted.

Currently, as of today, there are 38,244 NOTAMs active worldwide<sup>1</sup> and 53.27% of those are older than 90 days. This represents 20,327 NOTAMs and does not account for those NOTAMs that are revised. To circumvent the compliance aspect of long-duration NOTAMs, many States systematically revise NOTAMs after 90 days. Some NOTAMs have been revised like this for years. In addition, there are at the moment 5,163 “permanent” NOTAM. The sheer volume of these types of NOTAM is often the main reason why critical information gets overlooked.

Current filtering capabilities alone cannot fix this problem because another contributing factor to the volume of NOTAMs that we are forced to consume is the ineffectiveness of sorting. We are aware that there is inconsistency in the application of metadata, but even more concerning is the creation of non-approved NOTAM subject and condition codes. This also adds to the burden of our system providers and support-teams and significantly increases the risk of information being missed.

Every State signatory of the International Civil Aviation Organization Convention has the responsibility to adhere to the Standards and Recommended Practices and therefore, every State has a role to play in managing the volume of NOTAMs. We appeal to you to take firm action and to promptly review and remove all published NOTAMs of over 90-day in duration and cease the practice.

The aviation network is a wide field of professionals. Collaboration between all professionals is essential to reach our common goal of safe and efficient operations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack Netskar', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Captain Jack Netskar  
IFALPA President

<sup>1</sup> Data Source: NOTAMeter, which uses the API Data Service and does not include all NOTAM. Some NOTAM for local dissemination may not be included. Therefore, there were likely more than 38244 active NOTAM at the time this letter was written.

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# The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations



6 November 2020

To: All Member Associations

Dear Colleagues

The issues with the volume of NOTAMs is not new; we have all been dealing with it for many years. The ICAO Information Management Panel (IMP) has a dedicated sub-group addressing the issues with NOTAMs; IFALPA is represented on this Panel. The Panel is actively working on a replacement for NOTAMs, or a tailored solution, which is coming but will take some time to put into place. In reviewing the current situation, the sub-group has identified that many of the NOTAMs are valid for over 150 days. This is clearly not a temporary adjustment and should be inserted into the AIP as those NOTAMs just add to the unacceptable volume. In addition, it has been noted that several States do not follow the correct coding convention and often the text is verbose.

Whatever new or amended system is eventually put in place the AIS Community need to play their part. So as an interim measure it is necessary for the AIS community to help with this by reviewing their procedures and reducing their long-standing NOTAMs and at least use the correct codes.

The attached letter has been sent to the ICAO Regional Offices for them to distribute to their AIS community, it would be helpful for every Member Association to send the attached letter to their NOTAM office in an effort to help alleviate the current situation.

Yours sincerely

Captain Jack Netskar  
IFALPA President