

News Release

Press Office:

+44 (0) 1489 615945

www.nats.co.uk

International flight plan changes set to come into force

Pilots should be aware of international changes to the format of flight plans which come into effect from 15 November.

The changes, part of the Flight Plan 2012 project, are being introduced by ICAO and Eurocontrol and will mean that pilots need to start using a new flight plan format.

The changes are focused on reflecting the advances in the communication and navigation equipment on board aircraft and to assist air traffic management measures for commercial traffic.

From 15 November, flight plans and associated messages will be standardised for universal application and readability. Whilst this change will mainly impact commercial aviation, as all pilots use the same format, it will impact anyone who has to file a plan.

The 6,000 users of the NATS hosted flight plan submission tool, AFPEX, will notice that the system will be updated with a new user interface reflecting the updated format plans. This will be deployed at 00:01 on 15 October to allow a transition period, although the new flight plan rules will only be 'switched on' in line with the Eurocontrol timeline.

Dan Lewis, Watch Manager at NATS' Civil Aviation Communication Centre, said: "The updated version of AFPEX will take care of most of the changes introduced by Flight Plan 2012. However, we would still encourage users to make themselves familiar with the changes and the new flight planning requirements ahead of them coming into effect on 15 November."

"By deploying the new build early our customers will have a chance to get used to the new interface before the changes come into force."

NATS will be providing updates and amending its supporting documentation and website for AFPEX in time for when the changes come into force.

Anyone wanting more information on the changes to flight planning should visit the Eurocontrol website at: www.eurocontrol.int/fpl2012