Directorate of Airspace Policy
UK Meteorological Authority

As Distribution List

19 October 2007
8AP/26/00/22

Dear Colleague,

Implementation of Amendment 74 to ICAO Annex 3
UK Meteorological Observing and Forecast Arrangements for Civil Aviation.

Further to the letters dated 31st May 2007 and 7th August 2007 which detailed the consultation arrangements on Amendment 74 to ICAO Annex 3 and the arrangements for the use of AUTO METARs to initiate TAF production.

The CAA has now concluded these consultations and this letter details the responses that have been received and the implementation arrangements for the UK. A detailed list of the changes and consultation responses can be found in Attachment A.

As has been previously noted there are two key dates for implementation – **7 November 2007** will be the date for most of the changes to take place. Changes relating to the amendments to codes e.g. TAFs and METARs will be implemented on **5 November 2008** to coincide with changes to World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) Manual on Codes (WMO- No.306). This will also ensure suitable lead time for changes to observing and display systems.

As a result of the consultation a small number of changes have been made to the implementation arrangements. These are detailed below.

1. Introduction of a 30 hour TAF
This change is due to be implemented on **5 November 2008.**

The following aerodromes will receive a 30 hour TAF

London Heathrow	EGLL
London Gatwick	EGKK
London Stansted	EGSS
Manchester	EGCC

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2. Issuing of one TAF per Airport
This change is due to be implemented on **5 November 2008.**

The Meteorological sub group of the European Air Navigation Planning Group met in September 2007 and concluded that all European states would issue only 9, 24 or 30 hour TAFs. The UK has agreed to implement this conclusion from 5 November 2008. While the length of some aerodromes' TAF will be reduced compared to the current arrangements, where a separate 24 hour TAF is issued 7 hours ahead of validity start time, the changes will provide better continuity throughout the forecast period and meets the specific requirements of airlines, during flight planning of long-haul flights, for a globally standardised TAF format.

The TAF arrangements and issue schedules from 5 November 2008 are detailed in Attachment B.

3. Reporting of 5kt Gusts in local reports when noise preferential runways are in use.
This change is due to be implemented on **5 November 2008.**

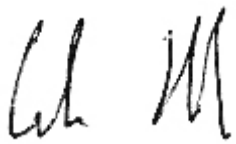
This matter has been referred to the CAA's ATC Procedures Working Group for further study and consultation. An ATSIN on this subject will be issued in due course.

4. Prevailing Visibility
The Met Office noted that there were potential safety issues with this change related to the reporting of CAVOK. Where a prevailing visibility of 10km and a minimum visibility of 5km to the West is observed this would be coded as 9999 in the METAR, when coinciding with the other defining CAVOK criteria, CAVOK would have to be reported. In the UK it would not be uncommon for the minimum visibility to become the prevailing visibility and that the METAR could well go from CAVOK to 5000m or less in one report, such a situation would not give advance warning to VFR pilots that the visibility is potentially close to limits.

For this reason the CAA has decided not to implement this change and that the current reporting arrangements for visibility will remain as at present.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



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Attachment A

ICAO Annex 3 Amendment 74 – OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

Proposed change	Short description of item	Comments	CAA Decision on Implementation
Introduction of 30 hour TAFs	Change of coding to allow the date and time to be uniquely identified in each TAF. Current code eg. TEMPO 2204 SCT001. New code eg TEMPO 0222/0304 SCT001.	• MoD note that Brize Norton will continue to issue 24-hr TAF, H24 airfields will issue 18-hr TAFs and "flying day" airfields will issue 9 or 12-hr TAFs. • MyTravel Airways support a 30-hr TAF for Gatwick. Longer-term they support 30-hr TAF for Cardiff, Prestwick and Belfast. • NATS notes operators at Stansted have asked for a 9-hr instead of 30-hr TAF. 30-hr TAF at Birmingham felt to be "excessive." • Thomsonfly would like to see long TAF for Bournemouth, Doncaster Sheffield, Durham, Exeter, Humberside, Norwich and Southampton • BA report the UK long-haul destinations are LGW and LHR but also operate a JFK-MAN. The primary UK diversion airfields are LGW/LHR/STN/BHX/MAN/CWL/GLA but also use (on occasion) EMA/NCL/EDI. • September 2007 ICAO European Met Group determined that long TAF will be either 24 or 30 hours and short TAF 9 hours long.	**To be implemented on 5 November 2008** • 30-hr TAF to be provided for Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester and Stansted. • NATS' findings that operators require 9-hr TAF at Stansted rejected on grounds that some operators fly to and from North America and will require a valid Stansted TAF for flight planning purposes. The CAA will closely monitor impacts of these new arrangements on TAF accuracy. • Long TAF for UK civil aviation will be either 24 or 30 hours, to align with European policy. • Birmingham will receive 24-hr TAF, along with Aberdeen, Belfast, Bristol, Cardiff, Coventry, East Midlands, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds/Bradford, Liverpool, London Luton, Newcastle, Prestwick. • Revised list of aerodrome TAF arrangements from November 2008 at Attachment B

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Proposed change	Short description of item	Comments	CAA Decision on Implementation
Issuing of one TAF per airport.	All TAFs to be issued 1 hour before start of period. 9 hour TAFs to be updated 3 hourly, 24 and 30 hour TAFs to be updated 6 hourly.	• MoD notes defence airfields issue only one TAF 1 hour before start of period, regardless of period. • AvBrief noted from a pilot's perspective, concern about the loss of forecast information that will arise from the proposed changes to TAF validity periods, and the impact that that will have on flight safety. • Norwich considered a 9-hr TAF was suitable for their operations	**To be implemented on 5 November 2008** • To align with European policy and ICAO Annex 3 standards, the UK will issue either 24-hr or 30-hr long TAF, issued 1 hour before start of period. Although the length of 14 aerodromes' TAF will be reduced compared to the present arrangements of 24-hr TAF issued 7 hours ahead of validity start time, these changes will provide better continuity and meet the specific requirements of airlines during flight planning of long-haul flights for a globally standardised TAF format. However TAF will be continuously reviewed and amended if required. It is felt that this will be of benefit since the long TAF at present is rarely amended. • Revised arrangements for TAF issue times at Attachment B
TAF change groups	Criteria for change groups, to be in line with those for SPECIs and local reports.	• No comments received	**To be implemented on 7 November 2007** • No implications for UK, as TAF change groups and special reports almost fully aligned with ICAO Annex 3. Differences filed with ICAO where not.

Proposed change	Short description of item	Comments	CAA Decision on Implementation
Definition of CAVOK	CAVOK not applicable when towering cumulus (TCU) contained in METAR (currently only applies when CB reported).	• MoD notes that towering cumulus with a base above 5000 feet in the UK is a rare occurrence. • As a general comment, representatives from the Light Airlines Association noted that towering cumulus can often be seen when they are 50 miles or more away from the aerodrome, and of no relevance to much traffic.	**To be implemented on 5 November 2008**
Reporting criteria for wind when noise preferential runways in use	Reporting of 5kt gusts in local reports when noise preferential runways are in use.	• Concerns raised by a number of respondents over the implementation of reporting of 5kt gusts in the local report when noise preferential runways are in use.	**ICAO Annex 3 change due for implementation in November 2008.** • Issue referred to CAA's ATC Procedures Working Group for further study and consultation.

Proposed change	Short description of item	Comments	CAA Decision on Implementation
Use of AUTO METARs to initiate TAF production	AUTO METAR to report wind speed and direction, visibility, present weather, cloud amount and height, temperature, dew point and pressure Production of Local Area Forecasts (LAFs) to cease from November 2008.	• Norwich noted it was content with the proposal • BHAB supported the proposal noting that it will provide a welcome improvement to the level of meteorological information available to crews during the flight planning stage. This improvement will be of particular relevance to those crews that conduct early morning departures to destinations in the East Shetland Basin, the Irish Sea, East of Shetland and in the Southern North Sea. • NATS requested clarification in CAP746 with regard overnight observer duty breaks. • BALPA supported the proposal but were concerned that aerodromes must comply with the MET reporting requirements, as otherwise pilots would not have a forecast available at all. They queried whether it would be possible to report runway visual range in AUTO METAR. Additionally they queried whether it was necessary to control the number and duration of observer duty breaks. BALPA supported 9-hr TAF based on AUTO METAR but felt that a proposal to base long TAF on AUTO METAR would need separate consideration. • Met Office supported the proposal, providing there was sufficient lead time for instigating requests and that suitable QC arrangements are in place for AUTO METARs.	**To be implemented on 7 November 2007** • Discussions will continue with the three aerodromes that are currently in receipt of a LAF and do not currently provide AUTO METARs. • CAP 746 will be amended in line with CAP 168 stating that no RVR reports are to be issued when the aerodrome is not operational. • CAP 746 will be amended to clarify overnight observer duty breaks. • Overnight observer duty breaks are described in AIP GEN and, from November 2007, those aerodromes that take duty breaks will be listed in the AIP. • The CAA has updated its METAR quality control process in order that it can report any deficiencies concerning METARS to aerodromes, both from certificated observers as well as automated observing systems.

Proposed change	Short description of item	Comments	CAA Decision on Implementation
Allow use of unidentified precipitation code in METARS	Allow use of new descriptions for AUTO METAR of showers of unidentified precipitation (SHUP), unidentified precipitation with thunderstorm (TSUP) and freezing unidentified precipitation (FZUP). In most cases unidentified will refer to the inability of the sensors to determine whether the precipitation is liquid or frozen.	• No comments received	**To be implemented on 5 November 2008**
Change to Prevailing Visibility reporting	Prevailing Visibility. Minimum visibility only to be reported if less than 5000M.	• Met Office noted potential safety issues with METAR reports changing from CAVOK to minimum visibility less than 5000m. • MoD practice is to report minimum visibility if below 8km.	**Not to be implemented** • Minimum visibility will continue to be reported in the UK as at present i.e. if less than 10 km and less than half the prevailing visibility.
Significant Weather (SIGWX) charts	Remove surface features including cloud other than CB from medium and high level significant weather charts.	• BALPA felt that the loss of surface frontal features took away some situational awareness for pilots.	**To be implemented on 7 November 2007** • Information pertinent to the flight will be retained (e.g. CB, areas of turbulence and icing) rather than including surface features on charts valid from FL100-450 or FL250-FL630. • FODCOM 27/2007 issued on subject • AIC (Yellow) 90/2007 issued on subject

Attachment B

List of Aerodromes detailing TAF arrangements from 5 November 2008

Airport	9 Hour TAF	24 Hour TAF	30 Hour TAF
Aberdeen		✓	
Belfast Aldergrove		✓	
Belfast City	✓		
Benbecula	✓		
Biggin Hill	✓		
Birmingham		✓	
Blackpool	✓		
Bournemouth	✓		
Bristol		✓	
Bristol Filton	✓		
Cambridge	✓		
Campbeltown	✓		
Cardiff		✓	
Carlisle	✓		
City Of Derry	✓		
Coventry		✓	
Cranfield	✓		
Doncaster Sheffield	✓		
Dundee	✓		
Durham	✓		
East Midlands		✓	
Edinburgh		✓	
Exeter	✓		
Farnborough	✓		
Glasgow		✓	
Gloucestershire	✓		
Hawarden	✓		
Humberside	✓		
Inverness	✓		
Islay	✓		
Kirkwall	✓		
Leeds/Bradford		✓	
Liverpool		✓	
London City	✓		
London Gatwick			✓
London Heathrow			✓
London Luton		✓	
London Stansted			✓
Lydd	✓		
Manchester			✓
Manston	✓		

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Newcastle		✓	
Norwich	✓		
Plymouth	✓		
Prestwick		✓	
Scatsta	✓		
Scilly Isles	✓		
Shoreham	✓		
Southampton	✓		
Southend	✓		
Stornoway	✓		
Sumburgh	✓		
Tiree	✓		
Wick	✓		

TAF Issue Times from 5 November 2008

9 Hour TAF

Start Time	End Time	Issue Time
0000	0900	2300
0300	1200	0200
0600	1500	0500
0900	1800	0800
1200	2100	1100
1500	0000	1400
1800	0300	1700
2100	0600	2000

24 Hour TAF

Start Time	End Time	Issue Time
0000	2400	2300
0600	0600	0500
1200	1200	1100
1800	1800	1700

30 Hour TAF

Start Time	End Time	Issue Time
0000	0600	2300
0600	1200	0500
1200	1800	1100
1800	0000	1700

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