

**Twenty Sixth Meeting of the
Informal South Pacific ATS Co-ordinating Group (ISPACG/26)**

Nadi, Fiji, 1-2 March 2012

Agenda Item 4: AI 26-1 Weather Deviations

Weather Deviation Requests

Presented by IATA – United Airlines

SUMMARY

This paper addresses operator's concern with timely response by controllers to requests for weather deviation, either via CPDLC or HF Radio contact. It is not uncommon in time critical situations for a flight crew to deviate without a clearance due to either a "standby" received from the controller or "unable due to traffic." The intent of this paper is to discuss both pilot and controller process in dealing with weather deviation requests.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pilot requests for weather deviations are common within the oceanic areas and can be initiated by CPDLC or HF Radio contact. The expectations of the flight crew, as detailed on the Pacific en-route charts, is an immediate response from ATC with a clearance to deviate as requested or if unable, to advise of conflicting traffic and to request pilot intentions..
- 1.2. Occasionally the response to a weather deviation request is either "Standby" or "unable due to traffic."
- 1.3. The ATC process in dealing with weather deviation requests may or may not result in a weather deviation "without a clearance" based on flight crew evaluation of the weather and time to coordinate prior clearance.

2. Discussion

- 2.1. A flight crew will initiate a request for a weather deviation when deemed necessary to avoid flying in close proximity to convective activity based on radar return or visual observation.
- 2.2. Flight crews are instructed to request weather deviations as early as possible. However, it is possible HF contact with a radio operator or a CPDLC downlink request for a weather deviation may be received with a minimum amount of time for

the controller to respond before the flight crew deems it necessary to deviate without a clearance.

- 2.3 A response of “standby” or “unable due to traffic” may result in a deviation without clearance by “Captain’s Authority,” if the flight crew deems aircraft safety would be jeopardized by any further delay. The flight crew will advise ATC of this deviation and take appropriate contingency action as described for the region.
- 2.4 The flight crew may be unaware of specific lateral and/or longitudinal separation standards being applied to their flight by ATC due to separation criteria that are based on aircraft equipage.
- 2.5 ATC may provide an amended clearance after the aircraft has deviated based on a modification to the deviation.
- 2.6 The weather deviation “process” should be discussed among ANSPs and operators to ensure a better understanding for both the controller and pilot concerning actions required by each.
 - **A suggestion to consider: Controllers, if unable to approve, should provide instructions as to what is acceptable and await pilot response.**
 - **Pilots: if able to comply should advise ATC of what they can accept and await clearance.**
- 2.7 The process described above is published on various charts (such as Jeppesen Pacific P1), however the expectations of the flight crew may be unrealistic and be in conflict with how the process is handled by the controller.

3. Action by the meeting

- 3.1. The meeting is requested to discuss the issues presented in this paper and to review the procedures listed for Weather Deviations for Oceanic Controlled Airspace and evaluate ANSP and operator processes in dealing with weather deviation requests. Operators should consider providing additional information to flight crews on the ATC process of dealing with weather deviation requests.