

AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR 1/20

OPERATIONS WITHOUT AN ASSIGNED FIXED SPEED (OWAFS) IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC

Introduction

This aeronautical information circular (AIC) outlines the procedures, phraseology and expected flight crew behaviour for the implementation of the Operations Without an Assigned Fixed Speed (OWAFS) in the North Atlantic within the Gander oceanic control area (OCA), effective on or soon after 29 January 2020. This information supports the North Atlantic Operations Bulletin 2019_001.

Background

OWAFS procedures have evolved and been designed over several years with the input of an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) project team consisting of representatives from multiple stakeholders, including operators and service providers.

Until recently, a fixed Mach speed was required for every flight crossing the North Atlantic (NAT). With the removal of that requirement, work began on how best to provide NAT operations with an option for variable Mach based on Cost Index (ECON - Boeing / Managed Speed - Airbus).

Discussions began with the premise that all operators would prefer, and in fact benefit, from OWAFS. This new implementation is expected to provide fuel savings that result in both reduced costs and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

There are no changes to the content or method of requesting or issuing oceanic clearances. Oceanic clearances will continue to be issued with a fixed Mach speed.

Operators are expected to adhere to the assigned Mach speed contained within the issued oceanic clearance unless the message "RESUME NORMAL SPEED" is received.

The message "RESUME NORMAL SPEED" will be offered to all flights where operationally feasible. There is no need for flight crews to request variable speed or cost index operations.

Flight crews may anticipate the message "RESUME NORMAL SPEED", after entering the Gander OCA.

Flight Planning

No changes to flight planning procedures are required. The Mach speed desired for NAT crossings must still be filed. Should a fixed Mach speed be required, the requested speed will be used by air traffic control (ATC) when designing the oceanic clearance.

During operations without an assigned fixed speed, the last assigned speed (requested or filed) will be the basis for ICAO Annex 2, "Rules of the Air" flight crew procedures:

- **Paragraph 3.6.2.2, "Deviations from the Current Flight Plan":** In the event that a controlled flight deviates from its current flight plan, the following action shall be taken:
 - **Subsection c), "Deviation from Mach number or true airspeed":** if the sustained Mach number or true airspeed at cruising level varies from the current flight plan by plus or minus Mach 0.02 or more, or plus or minus 19 km/h (10 knots [kt]) true airspeed or more, the appropriate air traffic services unit shall be so informed.

Controller-Pilot Data Link Communications (CPDLC) Messages and Voice Phraseology

CPDLC UPLINK OR VOICE	MESSAGE MEANING	REASON ATC WOULD UPLINK
RESUME NORMAL SPEED	Instruction to resume a normal speed. The aircraft no longer needs to comply with a previously issued speed restriction.	Allows for the use of cost index to produce a variable Mach. Fixed Mach is no longer required.
MAINTAIN [SPEED]	Instruction to maintain the specified speed.	An assigned speed is required for traffic separation.

Should flight crews request clarification, ATC will respond with:

Voice:	NO [ATC] SPEED RESTRICTION
CPDLC (free text):	NO SPEED RESTRICTION

Procedures

Flight Planning and Oceanic Clearances will not change.

When operations without an assigned fixed speed are available, flight crews will receive the message "RESUME NORMAL SPEED" via CPDLC or voice communication.

Flight crews are expected to select "ECON (Boeing) / Managed Speed (Airbus)" to fly a variable Mach.

Note: This speed should be within plus or minus Mach 0.01 of the last assigned Mach.

ATC shall be informed if, as the result of the message "RESUME NORMAL SPEED", the speed varies by plus or minus Mach 0.02 or more from the last assigned speed.

ATC will assign a fixed Mach if variable Mach can no longer be supported.

Further Information

For further information, please contact:

NAV CANADA
Gander Area Control Centre
P.O. Box 328
Gander, NL A1V 1W7
Attn: Jeffrey Edison, Manager
ACC Operations

Direct line: 709-651-5223
E-mail: edisonj@navcanada.ca



Jeff Dawson
Director, Air Traffic Services (ATS) Standards