

The NOTAM system: A global campaign for improvement

A new IFALPA publication:

The IFALPA Future Air Traffic Operations (IFATO) document - Second Edition

News has been received in recent weeks that the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA)* has drawn the attention of its members to the history behind the NOTAM (Notice To Airmen) system which is nearly as long as commercial aviation itself.

In a message to Members the Federation indicated that the burden of this history is clear in pilots' daily pre-flight information bulletins. There have been numerous efforts through the years to improve the system, but none have been successful. This year will be different. IFALPA is an active contributor to ICAO's Information Management Panel and the work of the Panel and its sub-groups will now bring the first concrete step of improvement to the NOTAM system, it is reported.

The first target of the process is quantity. There is a need to reduce the amount of valid NOTAMs. Globally, the volume of NOTAMs published has increased from 250k in 2000 to 1.7 million in 2020. One of the main issues is that too many of these NOTAMs remain published past their recommended duration of 90 days. Roughly 20% of all active NOTAMs in 2020 were older than 90 days.

After collaboration with several stakeholders, IFALPA sent out a letter to the Aeronautical Information Service (AIS) community to raise awareness about NOTAM concerns. IFALPA Member Associations took the letter to local AIS offices to discuss the issue and by early April, ICAO commenced taking further measures to address the issue by launching a Global campaign on NOTAM improvement.

The first step following IFALPA's initiative is to eliminate old NOTAMs. The campaign will have ICAO working with its seven regional offices and its member states to find solutions to tackle this problem.

Pilots can easily list several ways the NOTAM could be improved: filtering, sorting, abbreviations, letter case, to name a few. These issues are well known in the ICAO working groups and they are working to fix them. IFALPA is involved in the process and its voice is being heard and respected. The work continues and is reported to be off to a promising start.

Registration for ICAO's webinar to launch the campaign opened. Pilots were invited to register and join the event to see and hear how ICAO is working with IFALPA, IFAIMA**, and OPS-group*** to improve one of the oldest and most persistent information management issues of modern aviation.

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On 8 June IFALPA reported that it was issuing: *The IFALPA Future Air Traffic Operations (IFATO) document - Second Edition*.

This is guidance material for representatives Member Associations to help bridge the current work program of the committees with projected future topics that will affect our technical work. It should reside between the current work in ICAO working groups and panels and the very high level 18POS03 - IFALPA Vision for the Future of Air Navigation and Weather Information document.

For more see: www.ifalpa.org/publications

**IFALPA is the global voice of air pilots. An international not-for-profit organization, IFALPA represents over 100,000 pilots in nearly 100 countries. The mission of the Federation is to promote the highest level of aviation safety worldwide and to be the global advocate of the piloting profession; providing representation, services, and support to both our members and the aviation industry.*

***The International Federation of Aeronautical Information Management Associations.*

****See www.ops.group*