



- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 INTRODUCTION | 7 AIRBORNE FILING |
| 2 LEGISLATION | 8 CLOSING THE FLIGHT PLAN |
| 3 FILING AT AIRPORTS | 9 RETURNING TO THE UK |
| 4 FILING ON LINE | 10 FLIGHT PLAN COMPLETION |
| 5 BACK-UP FAX | 11 SOME GENERAL TIPS |
| 6 ACTIVATING THE FLIGHT PLAN | |

ANNEX A – COMMON ICAO DESIGNATORS

1 INTRODUCTION

With the removal of barriers in the European Community, it is now convenient for General Aviation pilots to fly both from their local airfield/airport, as well as their farm strip, direct to the Continent. However, although British Customs & Excise and Immigration have simplified their systems, the European Authorities have not and it is still necessary to land at an airport with Customs and Immigration facilities in order to enter or leave the area of Europe in which the “Schengen agreement” is in force. It is not this leaflet’s intention to describe the relaxed procedures operating for Customs here in the UK – readers are advised to contact their local Customs and Excise Office to discuss their own individual arrangements.

2 LEGISLATION

a) VFR flight plans (FPLs) **must** be filed for the following flights:

- A flight to or from the United Kingdom which will cross the United Kingdom FIR boundary.
- A flight within Class D control zones/control areas. However, this requirement may be satisfied by passing flight details by Radio Telephony (RT).
- A flight within the Scottish and London Upper Flight Information Regions (but since this will be above Flight Level 245, it seems unlikely that many GA pilots will be concerned with this situation).

b) Other requirements exist for flights where an aircraft’s maximum take-off weight exceeds 5700 kg (12500 lbs).

c) In addition, it is **advisable** to file a VFR FPL if the flight involves flying over the sea, more than 10 nm from the UK coastline or flying over sparsely populated areas where Search and Rescue operations might be difficult. In addition, a VFR FPL **may** be filed for any flight at the pilot's discretion.

d) The Terrorism Act 2000 applies to flights between the mainland UK and the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

e) Some European Countries do not accept aircraft which only have a Permit to Fly (homebuilt aircraft, microlights etc). It is the responsibility of the pilot/operator to obtain permission beforehand from the State concerned.

f) In addition, some if not all of the following documents may be required to be carried in the aircraft: Tech. Log; Certificates of Registration, Airworthiness & Maintenance Release; Radio Licence; Interception Procedures (*SafetySense Leaflet 11*); Load Sheet; Pilot's Licence; Insurance Certificates and your passport.

3 FILING AT AIRPORTS

a) Assuming that the departure and destination aerodromes both have access to the AFTN communications network, the operation of the FPL is as follows. You complete the FPL at the Air Traffic Service Unit (ATSU) of your departure aerodrome and they will file it into the system on your behalf. The effect of this filing will be to inform your destination airfield, together with any of your alternates, that the flight is going to take place.



b) Once you get airborne, the ATSU will file a 'departure (DEP)' message and this will 'activate' the FPL. Thus the destination airfield, knowing your estimated time en-route from the filed FPL, and now knowing your departure time, will have an estimated time of arrival (ETA) at their airport.

c) Once you arrive, the ATSU at your destination will 'close' the FPL on your behalf, and that marks the end of the operation. If, however, you do not arrive **within 30 minutes** of your ETA, they will institute overdue action and subsequently Search and Rescue operations may commence. It is therefore essential that if you land at any airfield other than your destination, you **MUST** inform your original destination of this fact, otherwise the cost of the Search and Rescue action may be passed onto you.

d) This has covered the ideal situation where others handle it for you. If the aerodrome that you operate from is:

- an airfield or airport with an ATSU, but your operations are outside their normal hours, or
- an airfield without an ATSU, or
- a private strip without AFTN access,

the responsibility for filing, activating and closing a FPL rests with the pilot.

4 FILING ON-LINE

a) NATS have produced the “Assisted Flight Plan Exchange (AFPEX)” to allow organisations and licensed pilots to register themselves and file their completed flight plans at www.flightplanningonline.co.uk.

b) Once registered, and logged in through two stages of security, select “Flight Plan” from the ATS menu and complete the form (like that at paragraph 10). Much of the information should appear automatically as boxes are completed, or can be selected from a drop-down list as the computer cursor ‘hovers’ over the appropriate field, or by right-clicking.

c) The addresses for the destination, departure, and alternate aerodromes listed in the body of the FPL should appear automatically. However, the filer should select from the ‘VFR Addresses’ list all the FIRs from, to and through which the aircraft will fly, and any other addresses required by individual aerodromes or countries (these will appear as the main addresses are selected).

d) VFR flight plans filed through AFPEX are not acknowledged. A copy is retained in your OUT folder.

e) The AFPEX help desk telephone numbers are also those of the ‘parent AFTN’ which the ‘responsible person’ should contact if an aircraft fails to arrive. The numbers are:

0845 6010483 and
01489 612792

5 BACK-UP FAX

a) While AFPEX remains the primary means of filing a flight plan, a pilot unable to access AFPEX may fax a completed flight plan form to the Parent AFTN on **01489 612793**.

b) The Parent AFTN will correct the formatting as necessary and submit the FPL through AFPEX, returning a copy to the filer for checking and retention. Send it early enough to allow the process to be completed at least 60 minutes before the intended flight.

6 ACTIVATING A FLIGHT PLAN

a) Unless your aerodrome of departure has an active ATSU, it is the pilot’s responsibility to ‘activate’ the FPL. Prior to departure, arrange for a **responsible person** on the ground to telephone the parent AFTN as soon as you are airborne in order to pass a departure time. This has now activated the FPL.

b) A suitable **responsible person** could be your spouse, relative, friend, fellow pilot or secretary. Alternatively, once airborne, you could ask any ATSU by radio to activate the flight plan, but this could lead to delay if the controller is busy.

c) The activating message must include the aircraft callsign, the aerodrome of departure and the time of departure. The destination would also be useful, for example “Request activate VFR flight plan for G-ABCD. G-ABCD departed Little Puddletown for Ostend at 1340”.

7 AIRBORNE FILING

If it is not possible to file a FPL on the ground, it can be filed while airborne with any ATSU, but normally with the controller or FISO responsible for the area in which the aircraft is flying. In such cases the message should begin with the words 'I wish to file an airborne flight plan'. Once again, when this method of filing is used, delays can occur due to controller workload.

8 CLOSING THE FLIGHT PLAN

a) If you are landing at your planned destination within the UK, there is no need to 'close' the flight plan.

b) If you are landing outside the UK, or at an aerodrome within the UK which was not your planned destination, you must 'close' the flight plan to avoid unnecessary search and rescue activity. Even if you land at an aerodrome with an ATSU, it is advisable to confirm they have closed your FPL.

c) You may do this by radio (just before landing) or by telephone after landing.

9 RETURNING TO THE UK

a) Prior to departure for the return flight to an airfield without an ATSU (when closed for instance) or to a private strip, pilots are responsible for informing a **responsible person** at the destination of the estimated time of arrival. The responsible person is required to notify the parent AFTN if the aircraft fails to arrive within 30 minutes of the ETA. This action will then trigger the parent AFTN into alerting, overdue and Search and Rescue action. Obviously this person **MUST** have the telephone number of the parent AFTN. If the parent AFTN fails to hear anything, it will assume that the flight landed safely, i.e. NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS, and no further action is required. If the responsible person does inform the parent AFTN of your non-arrival, they will go back to the filed FPL to check departure times, routings and so on as part of the Search and Rescue procedures.

b) It can be seen that the **responsible person** is crucial to this operation. If no one is expecting you, no one will be looking for you if you do not arrive. If, in an extreme case, the pilot fails to find a **responsible person** at his destination, then he may contact the parent AFTN prior to departure and request them to act in the capacity of the **responsible person**. Should the pilot follow this course of action, he will be required to contact the parent AFTN within 30 minutes of landing at his destination or diversion airfield to confirm his arrival. Failure to do this will automatically result in the unit initiating alerting action.

10 FLIGHT PLAN COMPLETION

NATS provide guides to AFPEX under 'help' on their website. This is an abbreviated explanation to help in completing a form to fax for a simple VFR flight. Full details are obtainable from CAP [694](#) (The UK Flight Plan Guide). An ICAO poster on completing Flight Plans is available from Tangent Publications at Cheltenham.

Write in BLOCK CAPITALS.

If you are unsure of the correct addresses, write the countries over which you will fly in the address box, and go to item 7.

ITEM 7 AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION

INSERT AIRCRAFT REGISTRATION when the radiotelephony call sign will be the aircraft registration (OMIT THE HYPHEN)

ITEM 8 FLIGHT RULES

TYPE OF FLIGHT

INSERT **V** – VFR to denote the category of flight rules (other letters apply if you plan to fly under IFR)

INSERT **G** – General Aviation to denote the type of flight

ITEM 9 NUMBER

TYPE OF AIRCRAFT

WAKE TURBULENCE CAT

INSERT Number of aircraft only if more than 1

INSERT AIRCRAFT TYPE DESIGNATOR or ZZZZ if no designator or formation flight comprising more than one type (see item 18 TYP) Note: Aircraft Type Designators for most types are shown in Annex A to this leaflet.

INSERT **L** – Light (17 000 kg or less)

ITEM 10 EQUIPMENT

INSERT preceding the oblique stroke one letter as follows:

N – if no COM NAV Approach aid equipment for the route to be flown is carried, or the equipment is unserviceable. OR

S – if standard COM NAV Approach aid equipment for the route to be flown is carried and serviceable. (Standard equipment is considered to be VHF RTF, ADF, VOR and ILS unless another combination is prescribed by the appropriate ATS Authority). Individual letters apply to each item of navigation equipment.

THEN following the oblique stroke INSERT one of the following to describe the serviceable SSR equipment carried:

N – nil

A – Transponder Mode A 4096 Codes

C – Transponder Mode A 4096 Codes and Mode C

S – Mode S with altitude readout & aircraft identification (normal fit)

ITEM 13 DEPARTURE AERODROME

TIME

INSERT LOCATION INDICATOR of the departure aerodrome or ZZZZ if no ICAO location indicator assigned (see item 18 – DEP).

INSERT ESTIMATED OFF-BLOCK TIME in Universal Co-ordinated Time (UTC).

Note: Location Indicators are given in UK AIP and most flight guides.

ITEM 15 CRUISING SPEED

LEVEL

ROUTE

INSERT CRUISING TRUE AIR SPEED for initial or whole cruise as follows:

N (knots) followed by 4 digits (e. g. N0125)

(K = kilometres per hour)

Note: there is no provision for statute mph

INSERT CRUISING LEVEL for initial or whole cruise as follows:

A – Altitude in hundreds of feet (use 3 digits e.g. A025)

F – Flight Level (use 3 digits e.g. F055). OR

VFR – for uncontrolled VFR flights.

INSERT the ROUTE to be flown:

For flights OFF designated routes, list points normally not more than 30 minutes flying time apart and enter DCT (DIRECT) at the start and end and between successive points. Points may be navigation aids, or bearing/distances from these (10 miles on the 050 radial from DVR would be written as “DVR05010”), or latitude and longitude co-ordinates, as for example “5114N00122W”. Do not use aerodrome designators. For flights to and from France, include the point at which you will cross the FIR boundary.

ITEM 16 DESTINATION AERODROME

TOTAL EET

ALTN AERODROME

AERODROME

INSERT LOCATION INDICATOR of the destination aerodrome or ZZZZ if no assigned indicator (see item 18 – DEST)

INSERT TOTAL ESTIMATED ELAPSED TIME (EET) en route as a four figure group expressed in hours and minutes.

INSERT LOCATION INDICATOR(S) of no more than two alternate aerodromes or ZZZZ if no assigned indicator(s) (see item 18 ALTN).

ITEM 18 OTHER INFORMATION

INSERT 0 (zero) if no other information OR other necessary information in the preferred sequence shown hereunder, in the form of the appropriate indicator followed by an oblique stroke and the information to be recorded

EET/ – Significant points or FIR boundary designators and accumulated Estimated Elapsed Times to such points or FIR boundaries, when required by regional air navigation agreements or ATS authority (e.g. EET/DEVAL0030 or EET/LFFF0210)

TYP/ – TYPE(s) of aircraft, preceded by the number(s) of aircraft in a formation flight, if ZZZZ is used in item 9.

DEP/ – Name of DEParture aerodrome if ZZZZ is inserted in item 13.

DEST/ – Name of DESTination aerodrome, if ZZZZ is inserted in item 16.

ALTN/ – Name of ALTerNate aerodrome(s) if ZZZZ is inserted in item 16.

DOF/ - Date of flight if not the date of filing

RMK/ – any additional information.

ITEM 19 SUPPLEMENTARY INFO (NOT ALL TRANSMITTED)

ENDURANCE – used a four-figure group to express fuel endurance in hours and minutes.

PERSONS ON BOARD – includes passengers and crew, use TBN if number not known at time of filing, but update in activation call.

EMERGENCY RADIO – cross out equipment not available, including 'E' if you do not have an ELT transmitting on 406 MHz.

SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT – cross out equipment not available including S if none carried.

JACKETS – same as above and cross out J if no jackets carried.

DINGHIES – cross out both D and C if no dinghies carried.

REMARKS – enter other remarks regarding survival equipment (for example "406PLB" with the registration code) or cross out N if no remarks.

FILED BY – insert name of the unit, agency or person filing the flight plan.

TELEPHONE NUMBER – perhaps a mobile number you can listen to right up to engine start.

FLIGHT PLAN

PRIORITY

<<≡ FF →

ADDRESSEE(S)

<<≡

FILING TIME

____|____|____|____|____|____|____|____|

ORIGINATOR

____|____|____|____|____|____|____|____|

<<≡

SPECIFIC IDENTIFICATION OF ADDRESSEE(S) AND/OR ORIGINATOR

3 MESSAGE TYPE

<<≡ (FPL

7 AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION

- G B X D M

8 FLIGHT RULES

- V

TYPE OF FLIGHT

G

<<≡

9 NUMBER

-

TYPE OF AIRCRAFT

D H C 1

WAKE TURBULENCE CAT

/ L

10 EQUIPMENT

- s / C

<<≡

13 DEPARTURE AERODROME

- E G K A

TIME

1 1 0 0

<<≡

15 CRUISING SPEED

- N 0 0 9 0

LEVEL

V F R

ROUTE

→ DCT SAM DCT YVL DCT

<<≡

16 DESTINATION AERODROME

- Z Z Z Z

TOTAL EET
HR. MIN

0 1 1 0

ALTN AERODROME

→ E G T E

2ND ALTN AERODROME

→ E G H H

<<≡

18 OTHER INFORMATION

DEST/EGGESFORD

) <<≡

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (NOT TO BE TRANSMITTED IN FPL MESSAGES)

19 ENDURANCE

HR MIN

- E / 0 2 0 0

PERSONS ON BOARD

→ P / 0 0 1

EMERGENCY RADIO

UHF

→ R /

VHF

ELT

SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT

→ S

/

M

→ J

/ L

F

V

DINGHIES

NUMBER

→ D / 0 1

CAPACITY

→ 0 0 5

COVER

→ C

COLOUR

→ YELLOW

<<≡

AIRCRAFT COLOUR AND MARKINGS

A / RED/WHITE/GREY

REMARKS

→

PILOT IN COMMAND

C / SMITH

) <<≡

FILED BY

SPACE RESERVED FOR ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

SMITH

Please provide a telephone number so our operators can contact you if needed
0771500000

11 **SOME GENERAL TIPS**

a) The procedures as outlined above will work when filing FPLs over inhospitable areas or mountainous terrain in the UK. In this case, it can be seen that you will need a **responsible person** at both your departure and destination airfield and both of those will need to have the telephone numbers of the parent AFTN.

b) In case there is a future query, or you need to cancel and resubmit, keep a copy of your FPL ready filled in, so that you can refer to it.

c) If you do have to file your FPL by fax, the form allows you to include a contact telephone number in the remarks section, but in addition you may wish to **phone the help desk to confirm that the plan has been received.**

d) A test showed that it took well over a minute to fax the top copy of the older, multiple sheet FPL due to the shaded area, while the non-shaded COM copy took under 15 seconds. Either copy is acceptable for this purpose.

e) If your FPL is for a future date, make sure that the date (maximum 144 hours ahead) is entered clearly in item 18 using the ICAO convention (e.g. DOF/090127 for 27th January 2009).

f) It is essential that ATC is advised of cancellations, delays over 30 minutes and changes to FPL details. To prevent a double entry into the computer which would lead to confusion, always cancel the first FPL and resubmit.

g) When departing from smaller airfields, do not assume that the Air Ground Operator or FISO will automatically telephone a departure time to the parent AFTN on your behalf. Check with them or, once again, find a **responsible person** to do this for you.

ANNEX A

ICAO TYPE DESIGNATORS

(This list only covers some common light aircraft/helicopters on the UK Civil Register. The complete list is in ICAO Document 8643, available at most large aerodromes or on the ICAO [website](http://www.icao.int/anb/ais/8643/index.cfm) <http://www.icao.int/anb/ais/8643/index.cfm>)

AGUSTA	A109
AGUSTA/BELL 206 Jet Ranger, Long Ranger	B06
BEAGLE Pup Terrier	PUP AUS6
BEECH (RAYTHEON) most as types e.g. 19	BE19
CESSNA (INC REIMS) most as numbers e.g. except some complex e.g. 182R	C152 C82R
DE HAVILLAND as types e.g. Tiger Moth and Chipmunk	DH82 DHC1
DIAMOND as types except DA-20/22 Katana	DV20
EUROPA	EUPA
FOURNIER as types e.g.	RF4
FUJI FA-200	SUBA
GROB most as types e.g. except complex	G109
GRUMMAN AMERICAN most as type e.g.	AA5
JODEL most as types e.g. D-9 and series	D9
LUSCOMBE Silvaire	L8
MOONEY M-20, 201 231 etc (turbo charged)	M20P M20T
MORANE SAULNIER Rallye	RALL
MUDRY most as number e.g. CAP-10	CP10
PIPER most as type numbers e.g. but most PA28 piston, fixed gear	J3 P28A
PA28 Arrows	P28R
PA28 RT	P28T
PA23 Aztec	PA27
ROBIN DR-400 series	DR40
ROBINSON as type numbers e.g. R-22	R22
ROCKWELL Commander 112, 114 etc.	AC11
RUTAN Varieze	VEZE
SLINGSBY T67 Firefly	RF6

FLIGHT PLAN

PRIORITY

<<≡ FF →

ADDRESSEE(S)

 _____ <<≡

FILING TIME

____ →

ORIGINATOR

_____ <<≡

SPECIFIC IDENTIFICATION OF ADDRESSEE(S) AND/OR ORIGINATOR

3 MESSAGE TYPE

<<≡ (FPL

7 AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION

- _____

8 FLIGHT RULES

-

TYPE OF FLIGHT

<<≡

9 NUMBER

- _____

TYPE OF AIRCRAFT

WAKE TURBULENCE CAT

/

10 EQUIPMENT

- _____ / _____ <<≡

13 DEPARTURE AERODROME

- _____

TIME

_____ <<≡

15 CRUISING SPEED

- _____

LEVEL

_____ →

ROUTE

_____ <<≡

16 DESTINATION AERODROME

- _____

TOTAL EET
HR. MIN

ALTN AERODROME

→ _____

2ND ALTN AERODROME

→ _____ <<≡

18 OTHER INFORMATION

 _____) <<≡

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (NOT TO BE TRANSMITTED IN FPL MESSAGES)

19 ENDURANCE

HR MIN

- E / _____

PERSONS ON BOARD

→ P / _____

EMERGENCY RADIO

UHF

→ R / U

VHF

V

ELT

E

SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT

→ S

POLAR

/ P

DESERT

D

MARITIME

M

JUNGLE

J

JACKETS

→ J

LIGHT

/ L

FLUORES

F

UHF

U

VHF

V

DINGHIES

NUMBER

→ D / _____

CAPACITY

→ _____

COVER

→ C

COLOUR

→ _____ <<≡

AIRCRAFT COLOUR AND MARKINGS

A / _____

REMARKS

→ N / _____ <<≡

PILOT IN COMMAND

C / _____) <<≡

FILED BY

SPACE RESERVED FOR ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Please provide a telephone number so our operators can contact you if needed