

Safety Information Bulletin

ATM/ANS – Aerodromes

SIB No.: 2021-15

Issued: 27 September 2021

Subject: **Origination and Issuance of SNOWTAM for Promulgating Information on Runway Surface Conditions – Global Reporting Format**

Ref. Publications:

- Commission Regulation (EU) [2017/373](#) dated 01 March 2017, as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) [2020/469](#) dated 14 February 2020 and Commission Regulation (EU) [2021/1338](#) dated 11 August 2021.
- Commission Regulation (EU) [139/2014](#) dated 12 February 2014, as amended by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) [2020/2148](#) dated 8 October 2020.

Applicability:

National Competent Authorities (NCA), Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSP), aerodrome operators.

Description:

The intent of this SIB is to raise awareness of the correct use of the SNOWTAM for promulgating information regarding runway surface conditions.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) developed a new system and method for assessing and reporting the runway surface conditions, known as Global Reporting Format (GRF), to associate aeroplane performance calculations with the actual runway surface conditions in order to mitigate the risk of runway excursions during take-off and landing operations on wet and contaminated runway surfaces.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ICAO postponed the GRF implementation date from 05 November 2020 to 04 November 2021, while in the European Union the implementation of the GRF has already started on 12 August 2021, to ensure smooth preparation for the upcoming winter season.

Discussion:

The GRF concept involves assessment of the runway condition by the aerodrome operator using a standardised methodology, and provision of relevant information to the Air Traffic Services (ATS) unit, as well as to the relevant Aeronautical Information Services (AIS) unit, in order to promulgate it to the flight crews, to enable more accurate performance calculations and therefore safe operations.

This is information only. Recommendations are not mandatory.



The transmission of relevant information about runway surface conditions from the ATS unit to the flight crews is normally done through voice communication using specific phraseology, while the promulgation of this information through Aeronautical Terminal Information Service (ATIS) broadcasts is also possible (on the use of ATIS by ATS units, refer to [EASA SIB 2021-12R1](#)).

On the other hand, the promulgation of information about the condition of the runway is performed by the AIS unit through the use of SNOWTAM. A SNOWTAM is meant to be originated by the aerodrome operator in accordance with the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) 139/2014, and is issued by the responsible AIS unit in accordance with the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/373.

The use of SNOWTAM is reserved for the cases where it is necessary to notify “the presence or cessation of hazardous conditions due to snow, ice, slush, frost, standing water, or water associated with snow, slush, ice, or frost”. The provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) 139/2014 elaborate further that such conditions may exist due to the fact that the runway surface is completely or partially contaminated with the above-mentioned contaminants, and describe in detail such cases (see specifically ADR.OPS.A.065 and AMC1 ADR.OPS.A.065(a) which prescribe the conditions and the cases for the reporting of runway surface conditions, but also ADR.OPS.A.057 (d)(4) which concerns specifically the case where a SNOWTAM is originated by the aerodrome operator).

Therefore, a SNOWTAM may be originated by an aerodrome operator and subsequently issued by an AIS provider, only if the conditions described in the relevant regulatory framework are met, that is to indicate:

- a) the presence of a hazardous condition due to one or more of the above-mentioned contaminants (and changes to the characteristics thereof); and
- b) the subsequent cessation of the hazardous condition, as a result of the elimination of the contaminants.

Therefore, a SNOWTAM indicating that a runway’s surface is dry or wet may only be originated and issued in order to indicate that the hazardous conditions, stemming from the (previous) presence of one or more of the contaminants mentioned above, do not exist anymore.

Conversely, a SNOWTAM may not be originated and issued with the sole intent to generally indicate the lack of contaminants (if such contaminants did not exist before), as the absence of a SNOWTAM by itself indicates also absence of contaminants, while the condition of the runway, and the movement area in general, is always to be reported by the aerodrome operator to the ATS unit through the form of a runway condition report, which would then pass it on to the arriving/departing aircraft through voice-communication and/or ATIS.

Moreover, it is reminded that the origination and issuance of SNOWTAMs, when the conditions for their issuance are not met, unnecessarily impacts the overall NOTAM system, as it leads to NOTAM proliferation, and may also affect flight crew preparation, which ICAO is already trying to address through a [Global campaign on NOTAM improvement](#).

This is information only. Recommendations are not mandatory.



At this time, the safety concern described in this SIB is not considered to be an unsafe condition that would warrant Safety Directive (SD) action under Commission Regulation (EU) [139/2014](#), Annex II, ADR.AR.A.040, or under Commission Regulation (EU) [2017/373](#), ATM/ANS.AR.A.025.

Recommendation(s):

EASA recommends:

Aerodrome operators:

- To review, in coordination with the respective AIS providers, their procedures regarding the origination of SNOWTAM and ensure that they contain clear and unambiguous information on when a SNOWTAM is to be originated in the context of the GRF implementation, and that procedures are consistent with those of the relevant AIS providers, regarding SNOWTAM issuance.

AIS providers:

- To review, in coordination with the respective aerodrome operator, their procedures regarding SNOWTAM issuance and ensure that they contain clear and unambiguous information on when a SNOWTAM is to be issued in the context of the GRF implementation, and that procedures are consistent with those of the relevant aerodrome operators, regarding SNOWTAM origination.

Aerodrome operators and AIS providers:

- To review and update, as necessary, their arrangements to appropriately address the case of SNOWTAM origination and issuance, in the context of the GRF implementation.
- To ensure that their responsible personnel are duly informed about the application of such procedures, and that relevant training is provided, where necessary.

NCA:

- To take the above recommendations into account in the context of their safety oversight activities.

Contact(s):

For further information contact the EASA Safety Information Section, Certification Directorate, E-mail: ADs@easa.europa.eu.

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