

Safety Information Bulletin

ATM/ANS – Aerodromes – Operations

SIB No.: 2021-12

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Subject: Use of Aeronautical Terminal Information Service by Air Traffic Services Units to Promulgate 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.
- Commission Regulation (EU) [139/2014](#) dated 12 February 2014, as amended by Regulation (EU) [2020/2148](#) dated 8 October 2020.
- Commission Regulation (EU) [965/2012](#) dated 05 October 2012.
- Commission Regulation (EU) [923/2012](#) dated 26 September 2012.
- International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Guidance material on the use of [Aeronautical Terminal Information Service](#).
- ICAO Annex 11 (Air Traffic Services).
- ICAO Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Air Traffic Management (Doc 4444, PANS-ATM).

Applicability:

National competent authorities (NCA), air navigation service providers (ANSP), aerodrome operators, aircraft operators.

Description:

The intent of this SIB is to raise awareness of the use of the Aeronautical Terminal Information Service (ATIS) by Air Traffic Services (ATS) units to promulgate information regarding runway surface conditions.

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 it has been decided to implement GRF as of 12 August 2021, to ensure smooth preparation for the winter season.

Discussion:

The GRF concept involves the assessment of the runway condition by the aerodrome operator using a standardised methodology, and the provision of relevant information to the ATS unit, as

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well as to the relevant Aeronautical Information Services unit, in order to promulgate it to the flight crews, to enable more accurate performance calculations and therefore safe operations. The transmission of the relevant information from the ATS unit to the flight crew about the runway surface conditions is normally done through voice communication using specific phraseology, which is contained in [AMC1 SERA.14001](#) related to Regulation (EU) 923/2012 - Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA).

ICAO Annex 11 to which Regulation (EU) 2017/373 directly refers, until its Part-ATS becomes applicable as of 27 January 2022, prescribes the provision of voice-ATIS *“at aerodromes where there is a requirement to reduce the communication load on the ATS Very High Frequency air-ground communication channels”*, and defines additional requirements associated to the provision of voice-ATIS, while it recommends to be kept as brief as possible in terms of duration.

Thus, according to ICAO Annex 11, where voice-ATIS is provided, it is the responsibility of the ATS unit to prepare the voice-ATIS message about the runway surface conditions, and therefore to ensure that:

- the ATIS message is suitable in terms of content and structure, and is as short as possible to facilitate its communication to the flight crew;
- the phraseology used is appropriate; and
- the ATIS message is maintained up-to-date.

As the current EU regulatory framework does not provide specific guidance regarding the use of ATIS for supporting the implementation of the GRF, ATS providers may use the relevant ICAO guidance taking into account the applicable EU regulatory framework including the order of the information to be promulgated.

Note: It has been identified that the relevant ICAO guidance on the use of ATIS for promulgating GRF related information suggests to follow the order of information based on ICAO PANS-ATM (Runway Condition Report (RCR) after meteorological information). This, however, is not in line with the relevant provision of ICAO Annex 11, as transposed in Regulation (EU) 923/2012, which prescribes that the meteorological information is transmitted after the runway surface conditions.

Additionally, attention is drawn to the fact that, as part of the GRF concept, both Regulation (EU) 139/2014 and Regulation (EU) 2017/373 do not foresee the provision of information concerning “friction measurements” by the ATS unit to the flight crew in any way, including via the ATIS.

ICAO Annex 11 and point SERA.9010 of Regulation (EU) 923/2012 ‘SERA’, foresee that the ATIS message shall include *“significant runway surface conditions and, if appropriate, braking action”*. Despite this, the ATIS message should not include information about the “braking action” currently foreseen in ICAO Annex 11 and point SERA.9010 (ATIS), because it would contradict the GRF concept. However, in the case where aircraft operators report to the ATS unit as per point SERA.12005 (a) (9), that *“the runway braking action encountered is not as good as reported”*, such information is meant to be passed, without delay, by the ATS unit to the aerodrome operator, as well as to the next arriving/departing aircraft, until the aerodrome operator issues a new RCR. It is expected that the pilots will report using the terms described in [AMC1 CAT.OP.MPA.311](#) related to Regulation (EU) 965/2012.

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EASA intends to raise to ICAO the inconsistency between the ATIS-related ICAO Annex 11 provisions and other ICAO Annexes/PANS documents in relation to GRF described above, and to propose the amendment of the relevant EU provisions accordingly. Moreover, based on the GRF concept, the expression “significant runway surface conditions” should be understood as information concerning runway surface conditions which is received by the ATS unit, in the form of an RCR, or SNOWTAM.

Furthermore, it is reminded that, in the case where a digital ATIS (D-ATIS) is provided to supplement the service provided through voice-ATIS, it is also required that:

- the information transmitted via D-ATIS is identical in both content and format to the applicable voice-ATIS broadcast; and
- voice-ATIS and D-ATIS are updated simultaneously.

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) [965/2012](#), Annex II, ARO.GEN.135(c), or under Commission Regulation (EU) [2017/373](#), ATM/ANS.AR.A.025.

Recommendation(s):

EASA recommends:

ANSP:

- (1) To review, in coordination with the aerodrome operators, their procedures regarding the promulgation of information on runway surface conditions, to ensure consistency with the relevant procedures established by the aerodrome operators, and that all relevant interfaces between the affected organisations are properly managed;
- (2) To develop and implement robust procedures concerning the timely and correct dissemination of information through voice-ATIS and D-ATIS, with regards to the implementation of the GRF; and
- (3) To ensure that responsible personnel are duly informed about the application of such procedures, and that relevant training is provided, where necessary.

NCA:

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

Contact(s):

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