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ADVISORY CIRCULAR



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Washington, D.C.

Subject: DESIGNATORS/RADIO TELEPHONY ASSIGNMENTS FOR AIRCRAFT OPERATING AGENCIES, AERONAUTICAL AUTHORITIES AND SERVICES

1. PURPOSE. This Advisory Circular states the criteria for eligibility and procedures for requesting the assignment of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) three-letter aircraft operator designators and telephony designators; and for International Civil Aviation Organization two-letter designators and telephony designators for aircraft operating agencies, aeronautical authorities and services. Information about the reciprocal arrangements for using FAA three-letter aircraft operator designators and telephony designators for transborder flights between Canada and the United States is also included.

2. CANCELLATION. Advisory Circular No. 120-26E dated 10/16/78 is cancelled.

3. RELATED READING MATERIAL. Additional information on this subject may be found in FAA Handbook, 7340.1 (Contractions); International Civil Aviation Organization Document 8585 (Designators for Aircraft Operating Agencies, Aeronautical Authorities and Services); Federal Aviation Regulation, Part 189 (Use of FAA Communications System); and International Civil Aviation Organization, Annex 10, Aeronautical Telecommunications.

4. DEFINITIONS.

a. This section identifies the criteria for eligibility and procedures for requesting the assignment of an FAA three-letter aircraft company designator and radio-telephony designator; and for International Civil Aviation Organization two-letter aircraft company designator and radio-telephony designator for aircraft operating agencies, aeronautical authorities and services. Information about the reciprocal arrangements for using FAA three-letter aircraft operator designators and telephony designators for transborder flights between Canada and the United States is also included.

b. An aircraft company designator is a two or three-letter code, which when used in conjunction with the flight number, serves as the aircraft identification in the air traffic control system in flight plans, fix postings, control messages, computers., etc. When authorized, the designator/flight number combination is used instead of the aircraft registration number/identification (N number).

(1) Two-letter designators are applicable to International Civil Aviation Organization assignments for international record communication purposes and Air Traffic Service related functions.

(2) Three-letter designators are applicable to FAA assignments for national record communications and Air Traffic Service purposes.

c. A radio-telephony (air/ground call) is normally the company name or an abbreviation thereof used in combination with the flight number. It is assigned at the same time as the company designator and becomes the aircraft identification in air/ground communications with air traffic control facilities in lieu of the standard "type/tail number" combination. It is also used for telephone coordination purposes.

5. INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION TWO-LETTER AIRCRAFT COMPANY AND TELEPHONY DESIGNATORS.

a. Criteria.

(1) A two-letter designator is registered only for those aircraft operating agencies and other aircraft serving companies, which in the opinion of the state of jurisdiction, have a need for an exclusive designator. They are assigned on a worldwide basis to an aircraft operating or serving company for international operations. International Civil Aviation Organization two-letter company designators are assigned primarily for use on the international telecommunications service when it is deemed advantageous for air traffic control purposes.

(2) As stated in International Civil Aviation Organization Document 8585, telephony designators should be pronounceable and suitable phonetically in at least one of the following languages: English, French, or Spanish. Such telephony designators should, preferably, resemble the name of the aircraft operating authority or service.

(3) Aircraft operating agencies, which operate more than 10 scheduled international air operations per week (not seasonal) and generating the appropriate flight plan and other related flight operations over the Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network are eligible for an exclusive two-letter designator. International Civil Aviation Organization two-letter designators are not available to operators conducting purely domestic operations.

(4) Direct connection to the Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network is a requirement established by International Civil Aviation Organization (Document 8585).

(a) Within the United States, the Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network is the portion of the Aeronautical Fixed Service, identified as the Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network. The Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network is a telecommunication service between specified fixed points. It is provided for the transmission of international flight plans for the safety of air navigation and for the regular, efficient, and economical operation of air services.

NOTE. According to International Civil Aviation Organization, Annex 10, the Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network is an integrated worldwide system of aeronautical fixed circuits providing, as part of the Aeronautical Fixed Service, for the exchange of messages between the aeronautical fixed stations within the network. "Integrated" is to be interpreted as a mode of operation necessary to insure that messages can be transmitted from any aeronautical fixed station within the network to any other aeronautical fixed station within the network.

(b) Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network connections are authorized only for aircraft operating and serving agencies to introduce aircraft movement data into the air navigation system and the exchange of permissible traffic in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization Annex 10, and Federal Air Regulations Part 189.

NOTE. The requirement for exchange of international message traffic via the Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network is a consideration during designator assignment.

b. Requests for International Civil Aviation Organization Assignments.

(1) The assignment of two-letter designators and air/ground radio telephonies are made by International Civil Aviation Organization on a worldwide basis for international operations and use in the Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network. Requests for two-letter International Civil Aviation Organization designators shall be addressed to the FAA, Air Traffic Service, Flight Services Division, National Flight Data Center (AAT-430) 800 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20591.

c. Documentation to be submitted. In order to determine eligibility for an International Civil Aviation Organization designator and radio telephony, the following information is required:

(i) Name and address of company.

(2) Type of aircraft operation or service provided. In the case of a service, provide a list of those operators served.

(3) Intended use of Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network.

(4) Number and type of messages to be handled on a daily basis.

(5) A statement that the operator understands that charges will be assessed by Class B message traffic (when permissible in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization Annex 10 and Federal Air Regulation Part 189) and agreeable to executing an agreement with FAA and depositing funds in accordance with FAA regulations.

(6) Location and identification of distant correspondents.

(7) Copies of the company/operator published flight schedules.

(8) Number of the FAA certificate which authorizes the company's commercial operations.

(9) The Federal Aviation Regulation Part under which operations are to be conducted.

d. Basis for designator assignment.

(1) Two-letter International Civil Aviation Organization designators shall be assigned when it is deemed advantageous to United States air traffic control.

(2) International Civil Aviation Organization designators will not be assigned to eliminate problems that can be solved by changing registration number identification, or similar sounding company names.

e. Changes in company status.

(1) Operators are required to notify the FAA, Flight Services Division, National Flight Data Center (AAT-430) when they:

(a) Suspend or cancel operations for any reason.

(b) Change the name, address, or physical location of the company to which a designator and telephony have been assigned.

6. FAA THREE-LETTER AIRCRAFT COMPANY AND TELEPHONY DESIGNATORS.

a. Criteria.

(1) An aircraft operator may be assigned a three-letter designator and radio-telephony (air/ground call) provided:

(a) The assignment will be advantageous to the FAA in the efficient control and supervision of flight operations, including utilization of the Stored Flight Plan Program.

(b) The operator does not hold an International Civil Aviation Organization two-letter code and is not eligible for an International Civil Aviation Organization two-letter code assignment.

(c) A company is certificated for commercial operations under Federal Aviation Regulations.

(d) Flight operations are conducted on a regularly scheduled (not seasonal) basis with at least 10 round trips per week between two or more points.

b. Requests for FAA assignments.

(1) Designators in the three-letter series and air/ground telephonies are assigned by the FAA for use within the United States air traffic control system. Requests shall be addressed to the appropriate FAA Regional Office, Air Traffic Division.

(a) Requests for three-letter designators shall be reviewed by the Regional Air Traffic Division for adherence to criteria, adequacy of information supplied by the applicant, then forwarded to Air Traffic Service, Flight Services Division, National Flight Data Center (AAT-430) 800 Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20591, with recommendations.

NOTE. Regions shall review and determine whether a suggested radio-telephony is sufficiently different phonetically from the authorized radio-telephonies of other operators before recommending the assignment by AAT-430. Letters are not assigned as a radio-telephony.

(2) To be assigned a three-letter designator and radio-telephony for use in Canadian Control Airspace, address your request to: Aeronautical Information Services, Attention: SLPA, Transport Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0N8.

c. Documentation to be submitted.

(1) To support the application, the aircraft company/operator shall supply the following to the appropriate FAA regional office:

(a) Name and address of company.

(b) Three copies of the company's flight schedule.

(c) The number and date of the FAA certificate (and Canadian, if applicable) which authorizes the company/operator's commercial operations.

(d) The Federal Aviation Regulation (Ministry of Transport Regulations, if applicable) under which operations are to be conducted.

(e) Several suggested three-letter designators and radio-telephony calls, if desired. These are normally the company name or an abbreviation (coined version) thereof.

d. Changes in company status.

(1) Aircraft operators are required to notify FAA, Flight Services Division, National Flight Data Center (AAT-430), when they:

(a) Suspend or cancel operations for any reason.

(b) Change the name, address, or physical location of the company to which a designator and telephony have been assigned.

(2) A separate three-letter designator/telephony will not be assigned when the company is authorized an International Civil Aviation Organization two-letter code assignment.

7. USE OF AIRCRAFT-COMPANY AND TELEPHONY DESIGNATORS.

a. Use of the authorized designators in lieu of the aircraft registration number is recognized only for flight operations conducted within the United States air traffic control system. They may also be used for United States/Canadian transborder flights provided the operator holds both current Canadian and United States license of operation and meets the established criteria. Air traffic facilities shall only accept authorized designators.

NOTE. By agreement with the Ministry of Transport, Canada, the three-letter company designator system is now available for both countries' use on transborder flights into either United States or Canadian airspace, provided the operator meets the criteria and is authorized for operation in both countries.

b. Authorized designators and telephonies are valid only when the aircraft is being flown on regular published routes, for company business, i.e., in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Aviation Regulations under which an operating certificate was obtained from the FAA. When using the aircraft for personal flying or off the scheduled routes, the pilot must revert to standard identification procedures (type/tail number).

c. In all cases, the radio-telephonies must be listed in the "Remarks" portion of the flight plans. This requirement is necessary for the controller's correlation between the written records and radio communications.

d. An exception may be authorized to use the assignment outside of the United States or Canada when approval is obtained from the country of jurisdiction. The aircraft operator must obtain such approval in writing, in advance of using it in a flight plan. A copy of the approval from the other country must be forwarded to the appropriate FAA Regional Office, Air Traffic Division. Upon receipt, appropriate facilities will be notified of the authorization to use the assigned designator to a destination in a transborder flight. Otherwise, standard identification procedures are required for the entire flight if any portion of the flight is not subject to either United States or Canadian air traffic control.

e. An operator authorized an aircraft company designator and radio-telephony does not automatically qualify for entrance into the Stored Flight Plan Program of the air route traffic control centers. The Stored Flight Plan Program has requirements for entrance in addition to that specified in the criteria for designators.

f. The FAA, Flight Services Division, National Flight Data Center (AAT-430) reserves the right to amend or cancel designator assignments should there be evidence of misidentification of aircraft in the United States or Canadian air traffic control system with codes assigned to other aircraft operators.

NOTE. Federal Air Regulation 91 requires pilots to close air traffic control flight plans. Failure to do so when utilizing the authorized aircraft company designator and flight number as the aircraft identification, necessitating search and rescue procedures by the FAA, may result in withdrawal of the designator authorization.

8. PUBLICATION OF AIRCRAFT-COMPANY AND TELEPHONY DESIGNATORS. The effective date of International Civil Aviation Organization, FAA, and Canadian designators and radio-telephonies (air/ground call) will be established to coincide with the next aeronautical chart effective date. This will provide adequate lead-time for entry into the Stored Flight Plan Program, and for FAA and Canadian facilities to be advised of the authorized assignments pending publication in the Contractions Handbook.

9. SPECIAL RADIO CALLS.

a. Special radio calls (for use in lieu of the aircraft registration number with air traffic control facilities) are temporarily authorized only when their assignment will necessitate "special handling" by air traffic control.

b. Special calls may be authorized for the following categories:

(1) Commemorative flights.

(2) Large number of aircraft participating in an organized race.

(3) Aircraft operating during an emergency or disaster condition.

c. Requests shall be made with Air Traffic Service, Flight Services Division, National Flight Data Center (AAT-430). The following must be submitted with the request:

- (1) Type of flight.
- (2) Handling required.
- (3) Type and number of aircraft.
- (4) Routes and duration of operation.

d. After approval is granted, National Flight Data Center will notify the Federal Communications Commission.

10. LOCAL RADIO CALLS.

a. Local radio calls shall be used only for communications with the local tower, and for local VFR operations. They shall not be for use in filing flight plans.

b. Local call-signs are approved in accordance with the FAA Facility Operation and Administration Handbook, 7210.3, and the Federal Communications Commission Regulation 87.115.

c. Request for local call-signs shall be reviewed by the Regional Air Traffic Division for adherence to criteria, then forwarded to Air Traffic Service, Flight Services Division, National Flight Data Center (AAT-430), with recommendations.


R. J. VAN VUREN
Acting Director, Air Traffic Service

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Due to the proliferation of FAA three-letter operator designators and the ATC workload involved in assimilating large numbers of these designators, the company flight operations criterion has been increased. Accordingly, paragraph 6.a.(1)(d) is changed to read:

"Flight operations are conducted on a regularly scheduled (not seasonal) basis with at least 20 round trips per week between two or more points."

This change is effective immediately and applies only to new applicants.


R. J. VAN VUREN
Director, Air Traffic Service

Suggest filing this transmittal at the back of the AC. It will provide a reference authority for changes, a method of determining that all Changes have been received, and a check for determining if the AC contains the proper pages.

Initiated by: AAT-430

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