

NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

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National Policy

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SUBJ: OpSpec/MSpec A010, Approved Sources of Aviation Weather Information

1. Purpose of this Notice. This notice announces a revision to operations specification (OpSpec) and management specification (MSpec) A010, Approved Sources of Aviation Weather Information, and provides guidance for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certificate-holding district offices (CHDO) and principal operations inspectors (POI) assigned to certificate holders conducting airplane operations under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) parts 91 subpart K (part 91K), 121, 125, and 135. This notice also announces significant changes to guidance contained in FAA Order 8900.1, Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS), Volume 3, Chapter 26, Sections 1 through 4, which apply to the regulatory requirements for aviation weather.

2. Audience. The primary audience for this notice consists of FAA CHDOs and POIs assigned to certificate holders and program managers conducting parts 91K, 121, 125, and 135 operations. The secondary audience includes Flight Standards Service (AFS) divisions and branches in the regions and in headquarters (HQ).

3. Where You Can find This Notice. You can find this notice on the MyFAA employee Web site at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices. Inspectors can access this notice through the FSIMS at <http://fsims.avs.faa.gov>. Operators can find this notice on the FAA Web site at <http://fsims.faa.gov>. This notice is available to the public at http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices.

4. Background. The Air Transportation Division (AFS-200) conducted a comprehensive review of the OpSpec/MSpec A010, formerly titled “Aeronautical Weather Data,” currently issued. The review revealed a wide range of authorizations, some of which have been issued in a manner inconsistent with FAA policy and guidance. As a result of the FAA’s review and research, several changes have been made to OpSpec/MSpec A010 and to the guidance contained in Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 26, Aviation Weather Regulatory Requirements. Below are some of the highlights of the changes to OpSpec/MSpec A010:

- The OpSpec/MSpec language has been modified to conform to the individual regulatory requirements of parts 91K, 121, 125, and 135 operations.

- The OpSpec is now optional rather than required for certificate holders conducting part 125 operations.
- The Qualified Internet Communication Provider (QICP) table has been removed due to lack of a regulatory requirement for such a provider.
- A table has been added to the part 121 OpSpec template for an approved adverse weather phenomena reporting and forecast system.

Note: A sample OpSpec A010 template for part 121 operations is attached to this notice. The templates for parts 91K, 125, and 135 operations can be viewed in the automated Operations Safety System (OPSS), also known as Web-based Operations Safety System (WebOPSS). POIs should review the new A010 template as it applies to the type of operation conducted by the certificate holder or program manager for whom the POI has oversight responsibility.

5. Guidance. Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 18, Section 3, Part A Operations Specifications, contains guidance on how to issue OpSpec/MSpec A010. Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 26, Sections 1 through 4 contain detailed guidance on the regulatory requirements for aviation weather information. This guidance has been changed significantly to provide clarity.

6. Action.

a Parts 91K, 121, and 135.

(1) Mandatory Change. The revision to the A010 templates for parts 91K (Rev 010), 121 (Rev 030), and 135 (Rev 030) are mandatory changes. POIs will have the following time periods from the date of this notice to issue the new template and archive the old one.

(a) POIs of certificate holders conducting parts 91K and 121 operations will have 120 days from the date of this notice to issue the new template and archive the old one.

(b) POIs of certificate holders conducting part 135 operations will have 12 months from the date of this notice to issue the new template and archive the old one. Because of the large number of part 135 certificate holders, the Technical Programs Branch (AFS-260) has set up a mailbox as a means to assist POIs of certificate holders who desire to use weather forecasts provided by commercial weather information providers (CWIP), but who do not have an Enhanced Weather Information System (EWINS). POIs must review the requirements contained in Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 26, Section 2, subparagraphs 3-2072A and B to determine if HQ approval is required to list a particular weather provider in OpSpec A010. If a POI determines that HQ approval is required to list a source of weather such as a CWIP in a certificate holder's A010, that POI will complete the checklist contained in Appendix B of this notice and submit it to opspecapproval@faa.gov.

Note: The checklist contained in Appendix B is also appropriate for use by POIs of part 91K program managers and certificate holders conducting part 121 operations.

(c) All POIs must review the Order 8900.1 guidance referenced in paragraph 5 and ensure that the certificate holder is able to comply with all of the requirements of OpSpec/MSpec A010 prior to reissuing the template.

(2) Providers Listed in the QICP Table of the Superseded A010 Template. Prior to issuing the new A010 template, POIs must verify the following:

(a) That each certificate holder/program manager who has listed QICPs in Table 2 of the superseded A010 template is using those QICPs solely for the purpose of accessing weather information (via the public internet) that is provided by an aviation weather source authorized by regulation or approved by the Administrator (refer to Volume 3, Chapter 26, Section 2, paragraphs 3-2072 and 3-2073); or

(b) That the certificate holder is using information accessed through a QICP as supplementary information only and is not using the information to control flight operations.

Note: If the certificate holder/program manager is using a QICP that is also a CWIP, follow the guidance contained in Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 26, Section 2, paragraph 3-2074 for further direction.

b Part 125. The change to the A010 templates for part 125 is non-mandatory. POIs of these certificate holders are not required to issue the new template, which is Rev 01b of the OpSpec, and Rev 01a of the letter of authorization (LOA) for part 125 Letter of Deviation Authority (LODA) holders. However, POIs must note that the new A010 has been changed from being required or “Always Authorized” (depicted with a “Y” in the “Always Auth” column of WebOPSS) to optional or not “Always Authorized” (depicted with an “N” in the “Always Auth” column of WebOPSS). This means that if a POI or certificate holder makes any changes to OpSpec A004, Summary of Special Authorizations and Limitations, the previous A010 template, will automatically be archived and will be listed as “not authorized” in A004, unless the POI specifically authorizes A010 in A004 and then issues the revised template.

7. Disposition. We will incorporate the appropriate information contained in this notice into FAA Order 8900.1 before this notice expires. Direct questions or comments concerning this notice to the Air Carrier Operations Branch (AFS-220) at 202-267-8166.

John Allen
Director, Flight Standards Service

Appendix A. OpSpec A010, Approved Sources of Aviation Weather Information: 14 CFR Part 121

The certificate holder conducting 14 CFR Part 121 operations shall use the sources of aviation weather information described in this operations specification.

a. In accordance with §121.101, a certificate holder conducting domestic or flag operations is authorized to use the following sources of aviation weather information:

(1) For operations within the 48 contiguous United States and the District of Columbia, use weather reports and forecasts prepared by the National Weather Service (NWS) or a source approved by the NWS, in accordance with §121.101(b)(1).

(2) For operations outside the 48 Contiguous United States and The District of Columbia, the Administrator approves the certificate holder to use the following source(s) of weather reports and forecasts in accordance with §121.101(b)(2). List the name of each approved weather source in the text box provided.

Text Box

(3) The certificate holder is approved to use the Adverse Weather Phenomena Reporting and Forecast System(s) referenced in Table 1. If the certificate holder is approved to use an Enhanced Weather Information System in Table 2 of this operations specification, select “See Table 2” in all four columns provided in Table 1.

Table 1 - Adverse Weather Phenomena Reporting and Forecast System

Name of weather Source	Name of Manual Containing The Adverse Weather Phenomena Reporting and Forecast System	Date of Initial Approval of The Adverse Weather Phenomena Reporting and Forecast System	Date of Latest Revision of The Adverse Weather Phenomena Reporting and Forecast System

(4) When using forecasts to control domestic or flag flight movements, the certificate holder will use weather forecasts prepared from the weather reports provided by the sources named in subparagraph a of this operations specification.

b. In accordance with §121.119, a certificate holder conducting supplemental operations may use the following sources of aviation weather information:

(1) Within the United States, use weather reports prepared and released by the U.S. NWS or a source approved by the Weather Bureau in accordance with §121.119(a). For the purpose of this operations specification, the “Weather Bureau” is represented by the NWS,

(2) Outside of the United States, or at U.S Military Airports, where NWS issued or approved reports are not available, the Administrator approves the certificate holder to use the following source(s) of weather reports in accordance with §121,119(a). List the name of each approved weather source in the text box provided.

Text Box

(3) When using forecasts to control supplemental flight movements the certificate holder will use weather forecasts prepared from the weather reports that comply with subparagraphs b(1) and b(2) of this operations specification, in accordance with §121.119(b)

c. The certificate holder is approved to use an Enhanced Weather Information System (EWINS) to obtain and disseminate forecasts to control flight movements and provide reports and forecasts of adverse weather phenomena. If EWINS is not authorized, enter N/A in all four columns of Table 2.

Table 2 -EWINS

Name of Weather Source	Name of Manual Containing EWINS	Date of Initial Approval of EWINS	Date of Latest Revision of EWINS

Appendix B. Checklist for Obtaining Approval from AFS-200 to Add a Weather Source to OpSpec/Mspec A010

POIs of certificate holders or program managers who do not have an Enhanced Weather Information System (EWINS) must obtain permission from AFS-200 to approve a certificate holder/program manager to use an aviation weather report or forecast prepared by a source other than the ones listed below:

- The National Weather Service (NWS) or a source approved by the NWS.
- U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military observing sources.
- Meteorological offices operated by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Member States.
- Members of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
- PIREPs provided by aircraft of the same, or similar, type and size, and
- AIREPs provided by aircraft of the same or similar type and size.

In order to obtain permission from AFS-200, POIs must submit the following information to AFS-200:

- A. The name of the weather source.
- B. The reason for the need to use the weather source.
- C. The method the certificate holder or program manager proposes to use to obtain and disseminate the weather report or forecast. For example: Through their dispatch or flight following system, via the internet, or by voice.
- D. A copy of the portion of the certificate holder's/program manager's training program for flightcrew members, dispatchers, or persons authorized to exercise operational control that contains instruction on the use of the weather report or forecast prepared by the weather source.
- E. A copy of the training program for meteorologist or local observers providing the weather report or forecast.
- F. For weather reports. In addition to the requirements of paragraphs A through E above:
 - 1) The location(s) at which the certificate holder/program manager intends to use the weather report.
 - 2) The elements that will be reported. For example, temperature, visibility, wind direction, and wind speed. Refer to FAA Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 26, Section 2, Required Elements of a Surface Weather Report/Observation, subparagraph 3-2071D for a full list of required elements contained in a weather report.
 - 3) The method the certificate holder or program manager proposes for maintaining, or ensuring the maintenance (to certificated standards) of, the weather sensing equipment used in generating the weather report.

Note: POIs should be prepared to submit additional information to AFS-200 upon request, such as the qualifications of individuals providing weather reports or forecasts for the certificate holder or program manager.