

# NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
Air Traffic Organization Policy

N JO 7110.602

**Effective Date:**  
October 12, 2012

**Cancellation Date:**  
October 11, 2013

**SUBJ:** Volcanic Activity

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- 1. Purpose of This Notice.** This notice modifies the requirements in FAA Order JO 7110.10, Flight Services, for soliciting, classifying, and formatting pilot reports (PIREP) and adds the detection of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) in the aircraft cabin to the list of significant weather phenomena that may be handled and disseminated as Urgent PIREPs.
- 2. Audience.** This notice applies to all FAA and contract air traffic facilities.
- 3. Where Can I Find This Notice?** This notice is available on the MyFAA employee Web site at [https://employees.faa.gov/tools\\_resources/orders\\_notices/](https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices/) and on the air traffic publications Web site at [http://www.faa.gov/air\\_traffic/publications/](http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/).
- 4. Procedures.** Amend paragraphs 9-2-5, 9-2-11, and 9-2-15 to read as follows:

#### 9-2-5. SOLICITING PIREPs

- a. Solicit PIREPs for the affected area(s) when one or more of the following weather conditions exist, are reported, or forecast to occur:

Subparagraphs a1 through a6, no change.

7. Volcanic eruption, ash clouds, and/or detection of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) in the cabin.
  - (a) If only SO<sub>2</sub> is reported, ask the pilot if volcanic ash clouds are in the vicinity.
  - (b) Sulphur dioxide has a sulphur-like odor.

#### **NOTE-**

*Pilots may forward PIREPs regarding volcanic activity using the format described in the Volcanic Activity Reporting Form (VAR) as depicted in the Aeronautical Information Manual, Appendix 2.*

No further changes to paragraph.

#### 9-2-11. PIREP CLASSIFICATION

Categorize PIREPs as follows:

- a. URGENT. The following weather phenomena must be classified as an URGENT (UUA) PIREP:

Subparagraphs a1 through a5, no change.

6. Volcanic eruption, ash clouds, and/or detection of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) in the cabin.
  - (a) If a pilot only reported the smell of SO<sub>2</sub> in the cabin and confirmed no volcanic ash clouds were present, classify the report as a ROUTINE PIREP.
  - (b) Sulphur dioxide has a sulphur-like odor.

No further changes to paragraph.

**9-2-15. PIREP FORMAT**

Using TEIs as described below, prepare PIREPs for system entry in the following format:

Subparagraphs a through g2, no change.

*TBL 9-2-1*  
**Weather Type and Symbols**

<i>Type</i>	<i>METAR Code</i>
Volcanic Ash (incl. eruption or SO <sub>2</sub> ) .....	VA

Subparagraphs g3 through l7, no change.

8. Volcanic Activity. Volcanic eruption, ash clouds, and/or sulphur dioxide are Urgent PIREPs. Reports of volcanic activity must include as much information as possible; for example, the name of the mountain, ash clouds observed and their movement, the height of the top and bottom of the ash clouds, etc.

(a) If a pilot detected the smell of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) in the cabin and reported volcanic ash clouds, include “VA” in Weather and “SO2” or “SULPHUR SMELL” in Remarks.

**EXAMPLE-**

*UUA /OV PANC240075 /TM 2010 /FL370/TP DC10 /WX VA /RM VOLCANIC ERUPTION 2008Z MT AUGUSTINE ASH 40S MOV SSE SO2*

(b) If a pilot only detected the smell of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) in the cabin and confirmed there were no volcanic ash clouds, classify the PIREP as Routine and include “VA” in Weather and “SO2 NO ASH” or “SULPHUR SMELL NO ASH” in Remarks.

**EXAMPLE-**

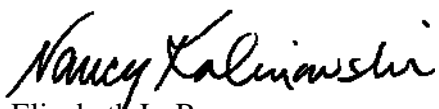
*UA /OV PANC240075 /TM 2010 /FL370/TP DC10 /WX VA /RM SULPHUR SMELL NO ASH*

(c) If a volcanic activity report is received from other than a pilot, enter Aircraft “UNKN”, Flight Level “UNKN”, and in Remarks “UNOFFICIAL”.

No further changes to paragraph.

**5. Distribution.** This notice is distributed to the following Air Traffic Organization (ATO) service units: Terminal, En Route and Oceanic, System Operations, and Mission Support; Office of ATO Safety and Technical Training; the Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service; the William J. Hughes Technical Center; and the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.

**6. Background.** The FAA is responsible for providing meteorological data to stakeholders of the National Airspace System. This includes disseminating and distributing observations, forecasts, and warning messages that pertain to volcanic activity including volcanic ash. PIREPs for volcanic activity and volcanic ash are provided to air traffic control in a specified format which is delineated in the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM). These reports are then forwarded to the Volcanic Ash Advisory Centers and are used to issue volcanic ash SIGMETs. These changes follow new International Civil Aviation Organization guidelines as set forth by the International Airways Volcano Watch Operations Group. These changes also comply with the National Weather Service (NWS) Federal Meteorological Handbook Number 12, Change 2, effective July 1, 2012.

  
Elizabeth L. Ray  
Vice President, Mission Support Services  
Air Traffic Organization

9-10-2012  
Date Signed