

FAA Notice for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

The Federal Aviation Administration advises that U.S. civil operators operating into, out of, within or over the territory and airspace of Afghanistan should operate only on established air routes and at altitudes at or above 26,000 feet AGL to the maximum extent possible due to ongoing military operations in Afghanistan and attempts by insurgents to attack civil aircraft. Aircraft that do not operate on established air routes or fly below 26,000 feet AGL are at risk of encountering insurgent small-arms fire, rocket-propelled grenades, anti-aircraft fire, and shoulder-fired Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS). Insurgent activity and coalition military operations continue at various locations throughout the country.

U.S. civil operators are advised that anti-aircraft weapons, to include MANPADS, are present in Afghanistan and remain a concern, particularly in the vicinity of combat outposts and forward operating bases (FOBs). Although MANPADS have been primarily fired at military aircraft, they have yet to be used against civil aircraft. However, there is a potential that MANPADS could be used against civil aircraft with little or no warning. Aircraft at airports/airfields have been damaged or destroyed by indirect rocket fire from insurgent attacks. With the drawdown of international military forces, the level of security at some airports may decrease and thereby result in increased threats to civil aviation.

This risk to civil aviation operations in Afghanistan has been demonstrated by various incidents that have occurred in recent months. In June 2014, heavily armed fighters launched a pre-dawn attack near Kabul International Airport (OAKB), targeting NATO's airport headquarters with rocket-propelled grenades, assault rifles and at least one large bomb. There were two injuries and the attackers were killed during the battle. In July 2014, OAKB was attacked by insurgents using rocket-propelled grenades, explosives, and automatic weapons from an area a few hundred meters outside the airport. The attack briefly suspended flights. Also, in July 2014, two rockets hit the military section of OAKB as a commercial aircraft was preparing for takeoff.

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