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InFO

Information for Operators

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http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/info

An InFO contains valuable information for operators that should help them meet certain administrative, regulatory, or operational requirements with relatively low urgency or impact on safety.

SUBJECT: Maneuvers Away From Planned Track in Oceanic Airspace.

Purpose: To inform aircraft operators of the need for pilots to coordinate with the appropriate air traffic facility when they plan a maneuver away from a cleared route.

Background: Improved aircraft tracking and reporting equipment is coming into use both onboard trans-oceanic aircraft and in the air traffic facilities controlling trans-oceanic routes. These new technology applications mean that maneuvers from planned track in excess of standard Strategic Lateral Offset Procedures automatically are reported to air traffic facilities, sometimes before flight crews are able to contact the facility regarding their maneuvering. At present, this can be a problem from a control and airspace coordination standpoint. However, as capacity enhancements, such as reduced aircraft separation, come into use, maneuvers away from track without coordination become a greater concern.

Discussion: The trans-oceanic flying environment usually involves long range flying that transits multiple weather systems. It is normal that flight crews would need to maneuver in oceanic airspace for the sake of flight safety, but they are required to coordinate such maneuvers with the appropriate air traffic facility. Oceanic traffic density is increasing, taking advantage of such technology as enhanced navigation, communication, and in particular surveillance. In this environment, coordination with air traffic facilities is increasingly important.

Recommended action: Directors of safety, directors of operations (parts 121 and 135), training managers, and pilots should maintain or refresh their awareness of reporting requirements involving maneuvers in oceanic airspace. The key in this awareness is timeliness in communicating a crew's intentions and/or actions. Air traffic separation plans are based on the cleared route of flight, so maneuvers away from the cleared route can affect airspace safety. By making air traffic facilities aware of a maneuver away from cleared route, crews may learn of other factors that may affect their plan of action.