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Newsletter - April 14th, 2010

FltPlan.com Announces the Winners of the First Annual Pilots' Choice Awards

Those of us at FltPlan.com would like to thank everyone who participated in our recent survey. We were pleased with the response of the First Annual Pilots' Choice Awards, and we are even more pleased to announce the results. Congratulations to the winners.

[Click here for the 2010 Pilots' Choice Awards Survey Results](#)



Blocked Tail Numbers, Flight Tracking, and Freedom of Information... Oh, My!

A recent Federal District court ruled that a list of FAA blocked tail numbers must be made available to the public. Naturally, many FltPlan.com users wonder how this affects them.

First of all, only those aircraft with tail numbers blocked at the FAA level will appear on the list. If your tail number is blocked at the ASDI vendor level, you are not affected.

Secondly, even if your N number is on this list (which is only available by filing a Freedom of Information Request with the FAA), your aircraft is still blocked from live tracking. This list does not make your travel plans public knowledge; it only shows that your tail number is blocked from view on tracking websites.

Why block your tail number at all?

In the not-so-distant past it was possible to fly your aircraft in relative privacy. Flight tracking vendors didn't release information to the general public - only to those in some way connected to the flight. This has all changed. Now your flight information and history are easily available from any internet computer or smartphone. Anyone who knows your N number can track every move that your aircraft makes. This could include the press, your competitors, your neighbor, disgruntled employees, banks, governmental agencies, etc. If you feel your flight schedule and history should remain private, you might want to block your tail number.

Blocking your tail number is a free process

Don't be fooled by companies that want to charge you hefty fees to block your tail number. This is a free service provided by NBAA. NBAA manages the BARR program, or Blocked Aircraft Registration Request. The BARR program is available free of charge to both members and non-members.

How to block your Tail Number

Operators with privacy and industrial security concerns resulting from the availability of Aircraft Situation Display to Industry (ASDI) data have two options for blocking aircraft flight tracking data:

Option #1 - Blocked by ASDI vendors

NBAA, through the BARR Program, centrally coordinates with all ASDI vendors to have your aircraft registration number blocked from their respective programs. Blocking the aircraft registration with the ASDI vendors removes the aircraft registration from view of all non-authorized persons. If your aircraft is blocked at this level, you will be able to track your own flights through an ASDI vendor.

Option #2 - Blocked at FAA source

For an additional level of security operators may choose to block their aircraft flight data at the FAA Source, which will remove all aircraft flight data before it is transmitted to the ASDI vendors. This means the information never reaches any ASDI vendor and therefore is not incorporated into their system. You will not be able to track your own airplane if blocked at this level. **This list is available to the public through the Freedom of Information Act.**

Tracking your blocked tail number

If you want to track your tail number once it's blocked at the ASDI vendor level, FltPlan.com can help. FltPlan.com lets you track your blocked tail numbers as part of our Premium Flight Tracking program. Premium Flight Tracking starts at \$14.95 a month and allows you to track up to 10 tail numbers at no extra cost. Be aware that some vendors charge over \$700.00 for one plane. For more information on blocking your tail number or tracking your blocked tail number [Click Here](#).

The Picture Perfect Divert (from a Flight Tracking Perspective)

Every so often a pilot needs to divert because of aircraft system problems or because of weather. We'll leave all the aircraft checklists and crew coordination items needed for a successful divert to others. One item not usually considered, however, is how this divert will effect your flight tracking data for those that might be watching on the web or getting email notification of your arrival.

First a little background

FltPlan.com gets its flight tracking data on your flights from the FAA's ASDI (Aircraft Situation Display to Industry) feed.



We also use this data for sending email notifications to our premium flight tracking customers when the aircraft lands.

The problem on a divert

When a pilot diverts, the controller might not change the flight plan data to show your new destination in the ATC system (which gets updated to the ASDI feed).

If the new diversion airport is not entered, then the ASDI will show that you are still landing at your original destination.

Since FltPlan.com will show what the ASDI shows, any scheduler, business associates, or family will still think you are landing (or have landed) at your original destination.

Why doesn't the controller always update your destination airport in the ATC system?

1.) He/she is probably pretty busy.

2.) It's not required if the aircraft is remaining within the controller's jurisdiction. (For example, if your flight will not be handed off to another Center.)

The Solution

When you divert, try to remember to ask the controller to 'enter the new destination airport into the system for flight tracking purposes'.

If the controller enters the new arrival airport, the ASDI feed will be updated, which means FltPlan.com will now have the correct information. We will then be able to send out email notifications to our premium flight tracking customers that your flight's destination has changed. We will also be able to show that your flight has diverted on our Flight Tracking pages.

Are you taking advantage of FltPlan.com Flight Tracking services?

Basic Flight Tracking is a free service of FltPlan.com providing the most accurate and largest displays of flight tracking data with 5 levels of zoom and high quality weather and route overlay. Please see <http://www.fltplan.com/FlightTrackinginfo.htm> for other features and available upgrades.

Also, for those flying aircraft with blocked tail numbers, please remember that you can track up to 10 of your blocked tail numbers for only \$14.95 per month (versus the outrageous prices charged by some other companies).

FltPlan.com handles more blocked N numbers for corporate and business aircraft than any other service.

Check Out Our New Feature: Calendar at a Glance

The next time you go to the calendar section of your Main Menu page, you'll notice a new icon. Our new 'Calendar at a Glance' is an additional interactive display option showing a user's schedule. Each month's schedule can be displayed with the option to scroll easily from month to month. Flights and events can be highlighted within the calendar box, and the selected weekly schedule can be displayed in detail.

'Calendar at a Glance' can be found on the **Main Menu** page, in the **Flight Schedule Calendar** section.

Help Yourself Get the Best Possible Service: Details to include when you e-mail FItPlan.com's support team

FItPlan.com is committed to providing great customer support. You can e-mail us at Support@FItPlan.com with any concern, and most e-mails are answered within minutes. Giving us the proper information, however, can make a huge difference to the ease and speed with which we answer your question. Help us to help you. Always include your full name, your FItPlan.com username, and your N number when appropriate. Also include a contact phone number, in case we feel a phone call would be more appropriate than an e-mail. Be very specific with your question and give us as much information as possible. For instance, if it's about a particular flight tell us your name, username, N number, and the departure and arrival airports. If you're writing because you received an error message, copy and include the message in your email. We'll be able to answer you more efficiently if we have all the necessary details right from the start.

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