FltPlan.com FLT BRIEF

Newsletter - January 20th, 2010

FltPlan.com Offers Help to Pilots Flying into Haiti

New Message Board

FltPlan.com has set up a message board to act as a central clearing point for flight information to help the relief effort to Haiti. This is a spot to post questions, add information, or simply make comments. We'll continue to post new information as we receive it, and it's our hope that our users will help each other, as well. Click here to check it out. **FltPlan.com Forums**

Flight Planning to Haiti

In response to the earthquake in Haiti, FltPlan.com has added all Haitian airports to our database. The following airports in Haiti are now in our database for flight planning:

MTPP (Port-au-Prince), MTCH (Cap-Haitien), MTCA (Cayes), MTJA (Jacmel), MTJE (Jeremie). Flight plans can be filed to all of these destinations using FltPlan.com.

Also, Emergency eAPIS activation is available to help you file your passenger manifest with Customs/CBP. For further information about our eAPIS service call 731-855-8000.

Understanding Airport IDs on FltPlan.com

You enter airport IDs just about every time you use FltPlan.com, but how many of you really understand what the difference is between **CRQ**, **KCRQ**, and **CLD**?

All three IDs are for the same airport (Carlsbad, CA).

How about **AUH**? It's either the airport in Aurora, Nebraska or Abu Dhabi International in the United Arab Emirates.

How about **LIH** and **PHLI**? (Same airport in Lihue, Hawaii.)

...and **SJD** / **MMSD**? (Same airport in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.)

...and **TCB** / **MYAT**? (Treasure Cay, Bahamas)

Different IDs for Different Folks

Airports can be identified by three different types in the U.S.:
1.) FAA identifier
All U.S. airports must have an FAA identifier. They are either 3 letters (i.e. JFK, HNL, 40N, 3S7, OAK, ATL) or 4 letters (i.e. 7FL6, OH40, NY51).
2.) ICAO identifier
Not all U.S. Airports have an ICAO identifier. (I.C.A.O. stands for International Civil Aviation Organization.)
All international airports have a 4 letter ID, registered with ICAO (i.e. KTEB, PHNL, TXFK, KATL, EGLL, MMMX, CYUL).
No numbers are allowed in an ICAO airport identifier.
All Mainland U.S. airports that have an ICAO code, start with a "K" (KTEB, KJFK, KLAX, KVNY, KMDW).
Airports in Hawaii and Alaska have ICAO identifiers that begin with "P" (PANC, PHNL).
Airports in Canada have ICAO identifiers that begin with "C" (CYUL, CYVR, CYYZ).
Airports in Mexico have ICAO identifiers that begin with "M" (MMSD, MMUN, MMEX).
Airports in Caribbean begin with "M" or "T", depending on the region.
3.) IATA identifiers
IATA stands for the International Airline Transport Association.
This could very well be the identifier that your passengers are familiar with, since these identifiers are what the airlines use in flight schedules and ticketing. The boss might send an email saying he wants to go to NAS, but as pilots we know it as MYNN.
For airports, three letter IATA IDs are used (i.e. JFK, HNL BDA, SJU, MEX).

Airport name	FAA ID	ICAO ID	IATA ID
Teterboro, NJ	TEB	KTEB	TEB
Hilton Head, S.C	HXD	KHXD	HHH
Bermuda	----	TXKF	BDA
San Juan P.R.	SJU	TJSJ	SJU
Mexico City	----	MMMX	MEX
(Spruce Creek) Daytona, FL	7FL6	----	----
Nassau	----	MYNN	NAS
Hilo International Hilo, Hawaii	ITO	PHTO	ITO

So how does this all equate to FltPlan.com?

As a FltPlan.com user, you probably go around the site without noticing TEB versus KTEB, or VNY and KVNY. You just know it's Teterboro, or that it's Van Nuys.

Problems arise, however, when you start to plan a trip to Alaska, Hawaii, or to an international destination.

For Instance, we all think of Nassau, Bahamas as NAS, but for flight planning you must use MYNN. If planning a trip to Honolulu, you must use PHNL (and not KHNL). If going to Vancouver, it's CYVR (not YVR or KCYR).

There can also be confusion when someone is trying to track a flight or when you view your flight tracking history.

Knowing which code to use:

ICAO for Flight Planning, Planned ATC Routes, EDCTs, and Airport Info

FlltPlan.com has used ICAO identifiers (or the 4-letter equivalent) for all flight planning purposes since our beginning (over 10 years ago).

When you enter a 3 letter ID for a U.S. airport, you might notice that we automatically convert it to a 4 character ICAO code.

If there is no ICAO code for an airport, and it has only 3 letters, then FltPlan.com will add a "K" at the beginning.

If there is no ICAO code for an airport and it has 4 letters, then FltPlan.com will use the 4 letter FAA ID for the ICAO Identifier.

For Canadian airports, you will need to enter a leading "C" to the Canadian ID to convert to ICAO (i.e. CYUL, CYVR).

IATA for Flight Tracking

FltPlan.com uses the IATA codes when displaying Flight Tracking information, since this is the industry standard (mainly because of airline flights).

If there is no IATA code, FltPlan.com will use the FAA code for Flight Tracking purposes.

So when the boss sends you a note saying he wants to go to PRG next week, you might want to ask if that was an FAA identifier or an IATA identifier he was referring to. (It might make a difference on how many changes of clothes you bring.)
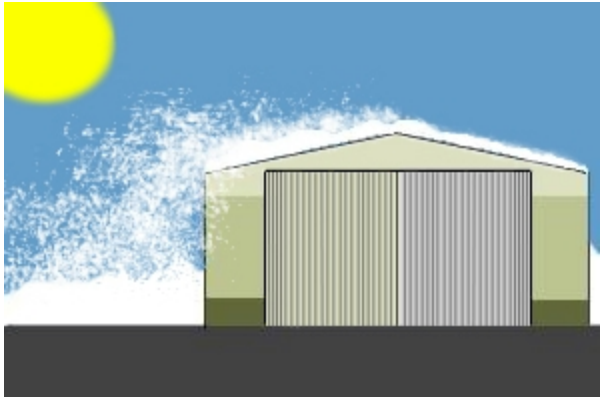
Icing on a Clear Day

FltPlan.com's "A Pilot's Story" is series of real-life, real airplane stories by FltPlan users; in this case by a Part 91 Flight Department Manager with over 30 years of flying experience.

You can get ice on a clear cold day, and not from the hangar's icemaker. It happened twice at our flight department in the last month, for two different reasons. In thirty plus years of burning Jet-A, I'd never seen exactly this sort of thing before. But hey, that's just me. The longer I hang around this flying business, the more I see that you can learn something new everyday - and if you don't... well, then take another look.

Case #1

The early December storm has passed and the kids had a ball playing in the snow. After the storm and the trailing blast of frigid air, came not the calm, but a bright sunny day, with fiercely cold, flight-jacket piercing northwest winds. The FBO neatly plowed the ramp, and the city did a great job on the runway and taxiways, but somebody completely forgot to plow the shifting, shimmering 12 inches of powdered snow high above on the hangar roof.

The airplane promptly comes out of the toasty warm hanger and onto the frigid ramp. It's fueled, catered, coffeed, iced, and of course, FltPlanned up. We're ready for passengers. Life is good. Free cookies coming at check-in and a geographic break in the winter weather.

However, try as we might, on that busy ramp there just wasn't a place we could find where the fine powder wouldn't do a wind-swept drift-down and hit a few choice spots where it would melt and then instantly refreeze on the slightly warm, half-sunny wing.

Is now the time for a few hundred dollars of de-ice fluid?
It was for us.

This is the more obvious episode of the two. Had the ramp been dark, or the plane on a quick-turn, would this sneaky clear-weather frosting have been seen and felt? When considering icing, it is important to realize that partially iced wings could be the worst scenario of all. As well as crucially reduced performance, the asymmetric lift profile might easily make for flight characteristics beyond the pilot's -- and control's -- ability to correct. At least it was a pretty quick and easy de-ice.

Case #2

Another snowstorm ended the day before. It was more wet and sloppy this time. After an on-the-road overnight on the ramp (the hangars were

full), the valiant crew is up on the wing with push-brooms, readying the plane for APU start, and tail and upper fuselage de-ice in the 28F degree conditions. In this case the passengers arrived about 45 minutes behind schedule, followed by a long taxi and an ATC-induced aeronautical meditation at the end of runway 1R. All told, the clearance came a mere 95 minutes or so after the steaming 140 degree de-ice fluid had us clean, clear, and legal.

Of course there aren't any hold-over tables for this situation; after all, it's a clear but very dark December evening. The suspicious crew, after looking out the side windows, figured to go have a cheap feel of the wing in the dark, even after $2,000 of the FBO's best Type 1. Sure enough, they found a fine-grit sandpaper finish, as the remaining thin goo had refrozen. A no-go situation. Back to the ramp, now $800 poorer and perhaps a bit wiser, the trip continues. Safely.

This ice and de-ice stuff is an inexact science, which is then applied to aluminum on a dark cold night by a real person in an imperfect world. In this case the well-heated fluid cleaned the fuselage top and tail, while the already cleaned wing was spritzed just in case. It 'shouldn't' have re-iced, but a very thin film of 50/50 fluid, mixed with ambient water, and now a not-so-toasty 28 degree wing must've been just right -- or wrong-- to sandpaper the wings again.

These incidents reminded us that we need to always keep our eyes (and hands) open and running along the wings. We should find it as smooth as and clean as... well, shiny paint on aluminum, if we want to get it safely in the air and back down again.

So, take no pride in yesterday's hours, and don't plan on tomorrow's: this one today is the only one that matters.

FltPlan.com Makes Booking a Room Easier?

When planning your trip, why not take the simple step of clicking on the **Hotels** link? In conjunction with **hotels.com**, we show you a list of hotels convenient to your destination.
You can use this feature to check out a hotel that you already booked a room in, or you can select a hotel and reserve a room right here online.

The Hotel button link is located on a variety of different pages including at the bottom of the Main Menu Page.
Getting all the information you need on a particular hotel is as easy as clicking a button.

FltPlan.com On the Android OS

FltPlan.com works exceptionally well with the Android OS. The Motorola Droid combines a full QWERTY Keyboard with Touch screen technology

to allow a smooth experience when using FltPlan.com. We also have an Android specific site located at **www.FltPlan.com/Droid.htm**. The Android OS also works with the Flt Deck Guide. More information on the Flt Deck Guide can be found at **http://wh83.FltPlan.com/AndroidInfo.htm**.

FltPlan.com On Twitter

Follow us on Twitter for up-to-date information on busiest airports, most used aircraft, and more. **www.twitter.com/FltPlan**

Lead Editor: Claire Warner -   Claire@FltPlan.com
Contributing Editor: David Wilson
Click Here to Subscribe to the FltBrief Newsletter.

Advertising Contact: Lisa Kessler
Lisa@FltPlan.com

Thanks for using FltPlan.com