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Newsletter - November 4th, 2009

One More Time - ICAO Equipment Suffixes:

"Where did my /Q go? It's showing /M!"

With so many new users coming over from FSS and other flight planning services, we're once again seeing a lot of questions about ICAO equipment suffixes and wake turbulence categories. So if you're one of our long-term users and you've read this before, we beg your indulgence. If you're new to FltPlan.com and you don't know why your aircraft type shows **/L**, keep reading.

On June 29, 2008 the FAA started requiring ICAO Format Flight Plans on all flights using RNAV departures and arrivals. In ICAO format flight plans, the wake turbulence category appears directly after the aircraft type. Wake turbulence categories are as follows:

- "H" for Heavy - Greater than 300,000 lbs. maximum certificated take-off weight
- "M" for Medium - Between 15,000 and 300,000 lbs. maximum certificated take-off weight
- "L" for Light - Less than 15,000 lbs. maximum certificated take-off weight

The confusion here is that in Domestic format the equipment suffix appears in this position. When filing ICAO format, the equipment is entered in item 10 (versus right after the aircraft type) and appears as a string of letters in the item 10 equipment box. So a Challenger 601 with standard equipment (which is VHF, ADF, VOR, ILS) and DME, HF Radio, RVSM, and RNP certification, and Mode S transponder would look like this: CL60/M - SDHRWZ/S (Fig. 1). If you're flying a Piper Saratoga with standard equipment (VHF, ADF, VOR, ILS) and DME, GPS, point-to-point RNAV capability, and a Mode C transponder it would look like this: PA32/L - SDGZ/C. (Fig. 2)

Navigation Log		FltPlan.com		
N1234A	IFR	GenAv	CL60/M	Equip: SDHRWZ/P
Dep: KMMU	1300Z	455kts	FL360	Filed Route (see below)
Dest: KPDK	ETE: 1:47		Altn: KRYY	
item 18: NAV/RNVD1A1E2 RNP4				
item 19: FOB: 0415 SOB: 4 PIC:BOB ALLEN				
LANNA J48 ODF.AWSON1				
Fig.1 - ICAO NavLog for a Challenger.				

Navigation Log		FltPlan.com		
N3456C	IFR	GenAv	PA32/L	Equip: SDGZ/C
Dep: KFPR	1900Z	143kts	7,000	Filed Route (see below)
Dest: MYNN	ETE: 1:46		Altn:	
item 18: NAV/RNVE99 RMK/PTP				
item 19: FOB: 0300 SOB: 3 PIC:BOB ALLEN				
BERTH BR62V ZFP BR65V ZQA				
Fig.2 - ICAO NavLog for a Piper Saratoga.				

When talking to ATC about aircraft equipment it's necessary to specify whether you're referring to ICAO or Domestic formatting. Here's why: Government computers are currently translating ICAO format flight plans back into Domestic format to send to Air Traffic Controllers. The change to ICAO formatting is part of a huge transition from the current system to the new ERAM (En Route Automation Modernization) system. Because of the many computer networks involved in ATC, the complete changeover to the use of ICAO data will be quite some time in the works. If you're capable of PDCs (pre-departure clearance), you'll also notice that your filed ICAO equipment information has been translated back into the Domestic format.

[Click here](#) for a full article on ICAO format flight plans, which appeared in FltBrief June 2009 Vol.1.

Check Runway Weight Capability on FltPlan.com

The last thing you want to worry about when landing is whether or not your aircraft exceeds the maximum load for the runway. (Maybe you never thought of it.) FltPlan.com can help by showing you the Runway Weight Capability for your arrival airport.

You can view this information by going to the FltPlan.com **Airport Info** page for your arrival airport. You will find the numbers listed in Runway Weight Capability (lbs) section (just below the FBO information).

Here is FltPlan.com's airport information page for KBTV (Burlington VT) showing Runway Weight Capability

Runway Weight Capability (lbs.)				
Runway ID	Single Wheel	Double Wheel	Double Tandem Wheel	Dual Double Wheel
01/19	30,000	40,000	60,000	N/A
15/33	100,000	175,000	355,000	N/A
These numbers are Advisory and are not limits. The Airport Manager should have more accurate Weight Limits Please email Support@FltPlan.com for further information.				

Now, where do these numbers come from, and what do they actually mean?

- a) These numbers come from the FAA.
- b) Runway Weight Capability numbers are advisory, based on an FAA formula, which is more limiting than the Actual Weight limit.
- c) The numbers the FAA provides are basically worst case scenario.
- d) The numbers are aircraft weight, and not per wheel weight. (i.e. The 30,000 above in Runway 01/19 is the total aircraft weight, and not the 30,000 for one wheel.)

The Actual Weight limit has many more variables including pavement condition, temperature, tire pressure, tire width, spacing between dual wheels etc. The Actual Weight limit can be higher than the numbers we provide from the FAA.

The Airport Manager should have more accurate Actual Weight Limits, which are derived from the PCN (Pavement Classification Number) and the ACN (Aircraft Classification Number).

So the bottom line is...

The Runway Weight Capability number is not regulatory, nor is it limiting. And the best source is the Airport Manager for a less restrictive number.

Real World use:

For most airports, a quick glance will let you know that you can land on the runway with no issues. (i.e. Your aircraft weight will be below the Runway Weight Capability number.)

If your aircraft is heavier than the number listed, then a call to the Airport Manager is probably your best course of action. The airport will be able to let you know, based upon your aircraft type and current airport conditions, whether you can use the airport/runway.

Transfer Aircraft Performance with FltPlan.com's Donor Feature

Did you know that you can easily transfer aircraft performance from one FltPlan.com account to another? Or that you can copy the performance from one of your aircraft to another aircraft in your own profile? You can accomplish either task quickly with our Donor feature.

Here are some uses for this feature:

Many times within a flight department, one pilot 'tweaks' the performance numbers for one of their aircraft, and wants to share the performance data with other pilots with different accounts.

You have multiple aircraft in your profile that are the same model, and you want to use your modified data for all your aircraft.

You know a pilot that flies an uncommon aircraft type, and you want to use the performance profile that he has created.

FltPlan.com's Donor feature lets you transfer the data to other FltPlan.com accounts or to another aircraft within your account, with a few easy entries.

It's as easy as following these steps:

Method 1. Copy Performance Data from another profile and use for N1212T

The data listed down below in Method 2 for N1212T will be replaced with the performance profile from the DONOR's Username & DONOR's Tail Number. Put the Username and Tail Number of the 'Donor' that you are getting the data from in the boxes below.			
DONOR's Username <input type="text"/> ex: PILOT123	DONOR's Tail Number <input type="text"/> ex: N1234A	Include Donor's ICAO Data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Copy Profile

- 1) Go to the **Main Menu** page and click on the **Customize A/C Performance** link. (It's on the left-hand side of the page in yellow.)
- 2) Select the N# for which you wish to import the data.
- 3) Click the Press Here When Done button.
- 4) Use Method #1 to copy the Performance data from another pilot's profile:
 - a.) Enter the donor pilot's username
 - b.) Enter the donor's N# (or call sign)
 - c.) "Include Donor's ICAO Data"
 - To include the aircraft ICAO Data, leave the checkbox selected.
 - If you do not want to transfer ICAO data, unselect the checkbox.

If you selected "Include Donor's ICAO Data", then the ICAO data will be used; however you will need to go to the A/C ICAO section to enter your emergency contact info.

5) Click the "Copy Profile" button.

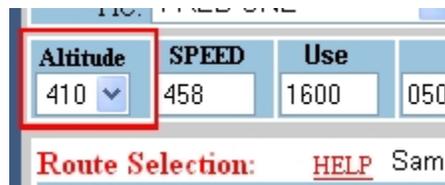
After completing these steps, the DONOR aircraft's performance data will now be used for your aircraft.

Pilot Control of Default Cruise Altitude

Maybe you love the convenience of FltPlan.com's automatic altitude selection, but you want to use different cruise altitudes than those to which our program defaults. With FltPlan.com, pilots can override the default cruise altitudes (for other than short flights) in the Quick Info section **or** when creating a new flight plan.

First a quick recap.

When creating a flight plan, FltPlan.com will select what we feel is the best cruise altitude for your flight. You can always override this altitude when creating the flight plan, by using the altitude drop down box, and selecting a new altitude.



Altitude	SPEED	Use	
410	458	1600	050

Route Selection: [HELP](#) Samj

However, suppose you are one of those "high flyers" that consistently like to fly higher than what FltPlan.com chooses, or maybe you're a "low-ride" that doesn't like flying above FL370 and we're choosing FL410. Not a problem.

Go to the **Customize A/C Performance** link on the left side of the **Main Menu** page. Select your aircraft and click Press Here When Done. Under **Menu 2 - Manually Change Performance Data**, look for the box marked **Cruise Altitudes - Set Default**.

Cruise Altitudes - Set Default (optional)

Use this feature to over-ride the computer generated default cruise altitudes (for other than short flights). Leave the boxes blank (empty) if you want the program to select the Cruise Altitude.

Default **West** Bound Cruise **Altitude:**

Default **East** Bound Cruise **Altitude:**

Now simply enter your desired altitude. If you select FL360 as your Default altitude, FltPlan.com will not use an altitude above FL360 as your selected altitude when creating a new Flight Plan. Be sure to enter a default cruise altitude for both Westbound and Eastbound flights.

Remember, you will still be able to modify your altitude when creating the flight plan.

Whether you like to go high or stay down low, you can select your favorite cruise altitudes as part of your profile on FltPlan.com.

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Lead Editor: Claire Warner - Claire@FltPlan.com

Contributing Editor: David Wilson

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Advertising Contact: Lisa Kessler

Lisa@FltPlan.com

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