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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: Use of the Experimental Alaskan Aviation Guidance (AAG) Weather Product.

Purpose: This InFO provides information to operators, pilots and aircraft dispatchers, regarding the use of the experimental AAG weather product, provided by the United States (U.S.) National Weather Service (NWS).

Background: The NWS provides Terminal Aerodrome Forecasts (TAFs) at specific locations that meet the International Civil Aviation Organization standards for an Aviation Forecast. Many Alaskan airports do not have access to TAFs. These gaps in the availability of weather information, coupled with the unique operational challenges in Alaska and the reliance of many remote communities on aviation services for access to goods and services, prompted the Federal Aviation Administration to request that the NWS provide an automated forecast product to support operations at locations where TAFs are not available. Based on this request, the NWS developed the AAG product at 61 locations. Due to the experimental nature of this product, its 24/7 availability cannot be guaranteed as system failures and maintenance may result in outages, which may only be addressed during regular business hours. Although the AAG is deemed experimental, it is available for use by operators that conduct operations in Alaska under Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) parts 91 without restriction or, 121, or 135 with approved procedures.

Discussion: The AAG is decoded plain language forecast based off the Localized Aviation Model Output Statistics Product (LAMP). The AAG is valid for 6 hours and updated hourly. See the example below:

Guidance for: PXXX (Someplace, AK) issued at 0900 UTC 12 Jun 2019 Forecast period: 0900 to 1000 UTC 12 June 2019
Forecast type: FROM: standard forecast or significant change
Winds: from the E (90 degrees) at 21 MPH (18 knots; 9.3 m/s) gusting to 28 MPH (24 knots; 12.3 m/s)
Visibility: 2.00 sm (3.22 km)
Ceiling: 1500 feet AGL
Clouds: overcast cloud deck at 1500 feet AGL
Weather: -RA BR (light rain, mist)

Forecast period: 1000 to 1200 UTC 12 June 2019
Forecast type: FROM: standard forecast or significant change
Winds: from the E (90 degrees) at 17 MPH (15 knots; 7.7 m/s) gusting to 25 MPH (22 knots; 11.3 m/s)
Visibility: 2.00 sm (3.22 km)
Ceiling: 700 feet AGL
Clouds: overcast cloud deck at 700 feet AGL
Weather: -RA BR (light rain, mist)

Forecast period: 1200 to 1500 UTC 12 June 2019
Forecast type: FROM: standard forecast or significant change
Winds: from the E (90 degrees) at 13 MPH (11 knots; 5.7 m/s)
Visibility: 1.50 sm (2.41 km)
Ceiling: 700 feet AGL
Clouds: overcast cloud deck at 700 feet AGL
Weather: -RA BR (light rain, mist)

The AAG is designed to be updated every hour, at all hours, for each location, and includes the latest surface conditions. This means the forecast is weighted towards the latest hourly Meteorological Aerodrome Reports (METAR).

AAG Limitations. Currently, the AAG does not account for thunderstorms, as no convective activity is forecasted in the AAG. Blowing snow is also not accounted for in the AAG. Lastly, as this is a completely automated product, updates will only be possible through changes to the LAMP guidance, with no manual changes by NWS forecasters possible.

Usage: Parts 121 and 135 contain multiple regulations requiring weather information to ensure the safety of operations that air carriers conduct. Such regulations often refer to weather reports or forecasts that meet the NWS standards. The AAG is a forecast tool and may be used in locations where a TAF is not available at the intended destination in Alaska. It is intended for use under Visual Meteorological Conditions (VMC) and within 6 hours from the time the forecast was taken. Certificate holders conducting operations under part 135 with approved procedures that operate to a destination airport without weather reporting may use the AAG when the destination weather is below 1000 feet and 3 miles (1000/3). Certificate holders conducting operations under part 121 (or Part 135 operators without approved procedures) could utilize their approved Enhanced Weather Information System (EWINS) and obtain a TAF if the AAG is forecasting a ceiling and visibility below 1000/3 miles.

Operators conducting operations under part 121 or part 135 cannot use AAG at alternate airports. The AAG is also limited for flight times of two hours or less in duration. The AAG, in conjunction with METARs, Pilot Reports (PIREPs), the Area Forecast (FA), Significant Meteorological Information (SIGMETs) and Airmen's Meteorological Information (AIRMETs), helps inform operators of the weather conditions at the estimated time of arrival and whether those conditions will be at or above the minimums, which determines whether operations can be conducted within the performance limitations of the aircraft per §§ 91.103, 135.213, and 121.101. In addition, the AAG will not indicate blowing snow or convective activity. If precipitation is forecasted, other products, including SIGMETs and Next Generation (NEXRAD) weather radar, where available, can determine if hazardous convective weather will be present when the aircraft arrives. The operator may then plan appropriately. The AAG may be used by operators conducting operations under part 91 without restriction.

How to Access the AAG Product: The AAG is currently available on the typical communication lines that provide weather information for Alaska. The AAG can be found at: <https://www.weather.gov/arh/aag>. Airports and reporting stations with the AAG are listed below:

Airports List

PAAK ATKA	PAMH MINCHUMINA
PABA BARTER ISLAND	PAMM METLAKATLA
PABL BUCKLAND	PAMR MERRILL FIELD
PABV BIRCHWOOD	PAMY MEKORYUK
PACZ CAPE ROMANZOF	PANI ANIAK
PADE DEERING	PANN NENANA
PADK ADAK ISLAND	PANV ANVIK
PAEG EAGLES	PAOH HOONAH
PAEH CAPE NEWENHAM	PAPB ST GEORGE ISLAND
PAEM EMMONAK	PAPH PORT HEIDEN
PAFE KAKE	PAPO POINT HOPE
PAFM AMBLER	PARC ARCTIC VILLAGE
PAGL GOLOVIN	PASA SAVOONGA
PAGM GAMBELL	PASH SHISHMAREF
PAHL HUSLIA	PASK SELAWIK
PAHP HOOPER BAY	PASL SLEETMUTE
PAHY HYDABURG	PASM SAINT MARY'S
PAII EGEKIK	PASO SELDOVIA
PAIM INDIAN MOUNTAIN LRRS	PASV SPARREVOHN
PAIN MCKINLEY PARK	PASX SOLDOTNAPATG TOGIAC VILLAGE
PAJC CHIGNIK	PATL TATALINA LRRS
PAKK KOYUK	PAVL KIVALINA
PAKP ANAKTUVUK PASS	PAWD SEWARD
PAKU KUPARUK	PAWI WAINWRIGHT
PAKV KALTAG	PAWN NOATAK
PALH LAKE HOOD	PAWS WASILLA
PALJ PORT ALSWORTH	PAZK EUREKA
PALU CAPE LISBURNE	PFYU FORT YUKON
PAMD MIDDLETON ISLAND	PPIZ POINT LAY
PATG - TOGIAC VILLAGE	PATO - PORTAGE GLACIER
PATC - TIN CITY	

Recommended Action: All pilots, aircraft dispatchers, and operators interested in reviewing information on AAG can access the information at <https://www.weather.gov/arh/aag>. The NWS is soliciting comments and feedback on the usability of this product, which can be submitted at <https://www.weather.gov/arh/aag>.

Contact: Questions or comments regarding this InFO should be directed to the Air Transportation Division at (202) 267-8166.