2 ICAO Flight Plan

2.1 Introduction

ATC Flight Plan

Reference: ICAO Doc 4444

An ATC Flight Plan is an advance notice of a pilot's intention for a flight giving details of the route, cruising levels and speed as well as information about crew, passengers, safety equipment, and onboard Navigation and Radio equipment. It is produced as a set format (Form CA48) to ensure completeness of information and compatibility with electronic data transfer between ATS and other units. There are two types of Flight Plan - IFR and VFR. These are split into three categories - individual, repetitive and abbreviated (airborne). The two categories that need to be looked at are:

- The Individual Flight Plan according to the ICAO Flight Plan form,
- The Repetitive Flight Plan (RPL)

2.2 Submission of ATS flight plan or information relevant to safe operation

Operators must ensure that a flight is not commenced unless either a flight plan is filed or adequate information has been made available to allow for search and rescue (SAR) if required.

2.2.1 Flights without an ATS flight plan

Where a flight plan has not been submitted or may not be closed (due to a lack of ATS coverage), operators should ensure that procedures provide:

- A list of authorized persons responsible for alerting search and rescue services
- Each authorized person with at least the same information normally included in a VFR flight plan as well as location, date and estimated time of re-establishing communications
- Notification to ATS or SAR, in the event the aircraft is overdue or missing
- Retention of the relevant flight information until the completion of the flight

2.3 Definitions (from ICAO Doc 4444)

Flight Plan

Specified information provided to air traffic service units, relative to an intended flight or portion of a flight of an aircraft.

Repetitive Flight Plan (RPL)

A flight plan related to a series of frequently recurring, regularly operated individual flights with identical basic features, submitted by an operator for retention and repetitive use by ATS units.

Filed Flight Plan

The flight plan as filed with an ATS unit by the pilot or a designated representative, without any subsequent changes.

Current Flight Plan
The flight plan, including changes, if any, brought about by subsequent clearances.

Estimated Elapsed Time
The estimated time required to proceed from one significant point to another.

Estimated Off-Block Time
The estimated time at which the aircraft will commence movement associated with departure.

Estimated Time of Arrival
For IFR flights, the time at which it is estimated that the aircraft will arrive over that designated point, defined by reference to navigational aids, from which it is intended that an instrument approach will be commenced, or, if no navigational aid is associated with the aerodrome, the time at which the aircraft will arrive over the aerodrome. For VFR flights, the time at which it is estimated the aircraft will arrive over the aerodrome.

Types and Categories of Flight Plan
There are two types of flight plan:
a) Visual Flight Rules (VFR) flight plan.
b) Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) flight plan.

Flight plans fall into three categories:
1) Full flight plans according ICAO model Flight Plan Form (see paragraph 2.4);
2) Repetitive Flight Plans (see paragraph 2.5);
3) Abbreviated Flight Plans: the limited information required to obtain a clearance for a portion of a flight (e.g. flying in a Control Zone, crossing an Airway) filed either by telephone prior to takeoff or by RTF when airborne. The destination aerodrome will be advised of the flight only if the flight plan information covers the whole route of the flight.

When to file a Flight Plan
A flight plan may be filed for any flight.

A flight plan must be filed for the following:
a) For all flights within Class A - D Airspace;
b) For all flights which will cross the FIR Boundary;
c) For any flight in Class F Airspace wishing to participate in the Air Traffic Advisory Service.
d) For any flight from an aerodrome in the United Kingdom, being a flight whose destination is more than 40 km from the aerodrome of departure and the aircraft Maximum Total Mass Authorised exceeds 5700 kg;

A VFR flight plan may be filed for any flight. It is advisable to file a VFR flight plan if the flight involves flying over the sea, more than 10 NM from the coastline, or over sparsely populated areas where Search and Rescue operations would be difficult.

Submission Time Parameters
Normally, flight plans should be filed on the ground at least **60 minutes** before clearance to start up or taxi is requested; however, for North Atlantic and flights subject to Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM) measures a **minimum of 3 hours** is required. (When completing the flight plan the departure time

entered in Field 13 must be the Estimated Off Block Time (EOBT) not the planned airborne time). Exceptionally, in cases where it is impossible to meet this requirement, operators should give as much notice as possible and **never less than thirty minutes.** Otherwise, if this is not possible, a flight plan can be filed when airborne with any ATSU, but normally with the FIR controller responsible for the area in which the aircraft is flying. If the airborne flight plan contains an intention to enter Controlled Airspace or certain Control Zones/Control Areas, **at least 10 minutes prior** to any warning of entry must be given. In all cases, the message should start with the words "I wish to file an airborne flight plan". It should be noted that passing an airborne flight plan over the radio may, due to the controller's workload, result in a delay in the message being filed.

Action in the Event of Diversion

If a pilot lands at an aerodrome other than the destination specified in the flight plan, he must ensure that the ATSU at the original destination is informed **within 30 minutes** of his flight planned ETA, to avoid unnecessary action being taken by the Alerting Services.

Exemption from ICAO PANS RAC for IFR flights to and from Europe.

Since April 1st 2002 it is mandatory to report a deviation from the EOBT of 15 minutes or more for flights departing from or arriving in Europe.

Canceling an IFR Flight Plan

If a pilot has begun a flight in Controlled Airspace under an IFR flight plan, he may decide, on entering VMC, that he will cancel his IFR flight plan and VFR. However, it must be stressed that a pilot cannot exercise this choice in Controlled Airspace which is notified as Class A Airspace (in which all flights in all weather conditions are subject to IFR procedures). In Controlled Airspace where the exercise of the pilot's choice is possible, pilots may request the cancellation of IFR flight plans by notifying the ACC, providing that they are operating in VMC. An IFR flight plan may be cancelled by transmitting the following message"..... (identification) - Cancel IFR flight plan". An ATC cannot approve or disapprove cancellation of an IFR flight plan but, when in possession of information that IMC is likely to be encountered along the intended route of flight, will advise the pilot accordingly as follows: "IMC reported (or forecast) in the vicinity of....".

The fact that a pilot reports that he is flying in VMC does not in itself constitute cancellation of an IFR flight plan. Unless cancellation action is taken, the flight will continue to be regulated in relation to IFR traffic.

Changes, Delays or Cancellation of a Flight Plan

It is essential that ATC is advised of cancellations, delays **over 30 minutes** and changes to flight plan details. A second flight plan cannot be used to amend the first. **The original flight plan must first be cancelled and then a revised flight plan filed.**

Change of speed or level

The point at which a change of speed (5% TAS or 0.01 Mach or more) or a change of level is planned, has to noted in the flight plan even when only one of these quantities will be changed.

In order to comply with PANS-RAC, during an IFR flight, deviations from flight plan particulars should be reported to ATC. Concerning TAS and time, the minimum deviations, which must be reported, are: TAS 5% and time 3 minutes.

The UK AIP recommends that it is advisable to file a VFR flight plan if the flight involves flying over the sea, more than 10 NM form the coastline, or over sparsely populated areas where Search and Rescue operations would be difficult.

Submission Time Parameters

VFR flight plans should be submitted to the ATSU at the departure aerodrome on ICAO model Flight Plan Form **at least 60 minutes before clearance to start up or taxi is requested.**

Airborne Time

The pilot is responsible to ensuring that the airborne time of the flight is passed to the ATSU with whom the flight plan has been filed. The ATSU will ensure that the departure message, if required, is sent to the appropriate addressees. The pilot should try to arrange for a 'responsible person' on the ground to telephone the airborne time to the ATSU, as passing it over the RTF may, due to controller workload, lead to a delay in sending a departure message. Failure to pass the airborne time will result in the flight plan remaining inactive; consequently, this could result in the destination aerodrome not being aware that alerting action should be taken.

Action when the Destination Aerodrome has no ATSU or AFTN Link

If a pilot has filed a VFR flight plan to a destination which does not have an active ATSU and is not connected to the AFTN, he is required to pass the ETA, prior to departure to a 'responsible person' at the destination aerodrome. **In the event of the aircraft failing to arrive at the destination aerodrome within 30 minutes of the notified ETA, the 'responsible person' must IMMEDIATELY advise the Parent Unit.** This action is the trigger by which the Parent Unit will commence alerting action.

Exceptionally, where a pilot is unable to find someone to act as a 'responsible person' at the destination aerodrome, he must contact the appropriate Parent Unit prior to departure and request that it acts in this capacity. Should a pilot need to take this course of action, **he will be required to contact the Parent Unit within 30 minutes of landing** at the destination to confirm his arrival. Failure to complete this action will automatically result in the Parent Unit initiating alerting action.

FLIGHT PLAN
1 ICAO model Flight plan form

This form is found at page A2-2 PANS-RAC Doc 4444, or Jeppesen Student Pilot Route Manual page 434 H.

Note
There is a different form for repetitive flight plans.

The flight plan form should be printed and should include an English text in addition to the language(s) of the State concerned.

Note
The instructions for completing a flight plan form given in Doc 4444 may be conveniently printed on the inside cover of flight plan form pads, or posted in briefing rooms.

An operator unable to satisfy a prescribed route or area RNP* should, prior to departure, advise ATC of the RNP* types the aircraft is certified to meet.

* Required Navigation Performance (RNP) is a statement of the navigation performance accuracy necessary for operation within a defined airspace. RNP type is a containment value expressed as a distance in NM from the intended position within which flights would be for **at least 95% of the total flying time. e.g. RNP 5 represents a navigation accuracy of 5NM on a 95% containment basis.**

Acceptance of a flight plan.
The first air traffic services unit receiving a flight plan, or a change there to, shall:

1) Check it for compliance with the format and data conventions;

2) Check it for completeness and, to the extent possible, for accuracy;

3) Take action, if necessary, to make it acceptable to the air traffic services; and

4) Indicate acceptance of the flight plan or change thereto, to the originator.

2.4 Instructions for the Completion of Flight Plan Form (See Jeppesen Student Manual, ATC Section)

General
Adhere closely to the prescibed formats and manner of specifying data.

Commence inserting data in the first space provided. Where excess space is available, leave unused spaces blank.

Insert all clock times in *4 figures UTC.*

Insert all estimated elapsed times in 4 figures (hours and minutes).

Shaded area preceding Item 3 to be completed by ATS and COM services, unless the responsibility for originating flight plan messages has been delegated.

Note
The term "aerodrome" where used in the flight plan is intended to cover also sites other than aerodromes which may be used by certain types of aircraft, e.g. helicopters or balloons.

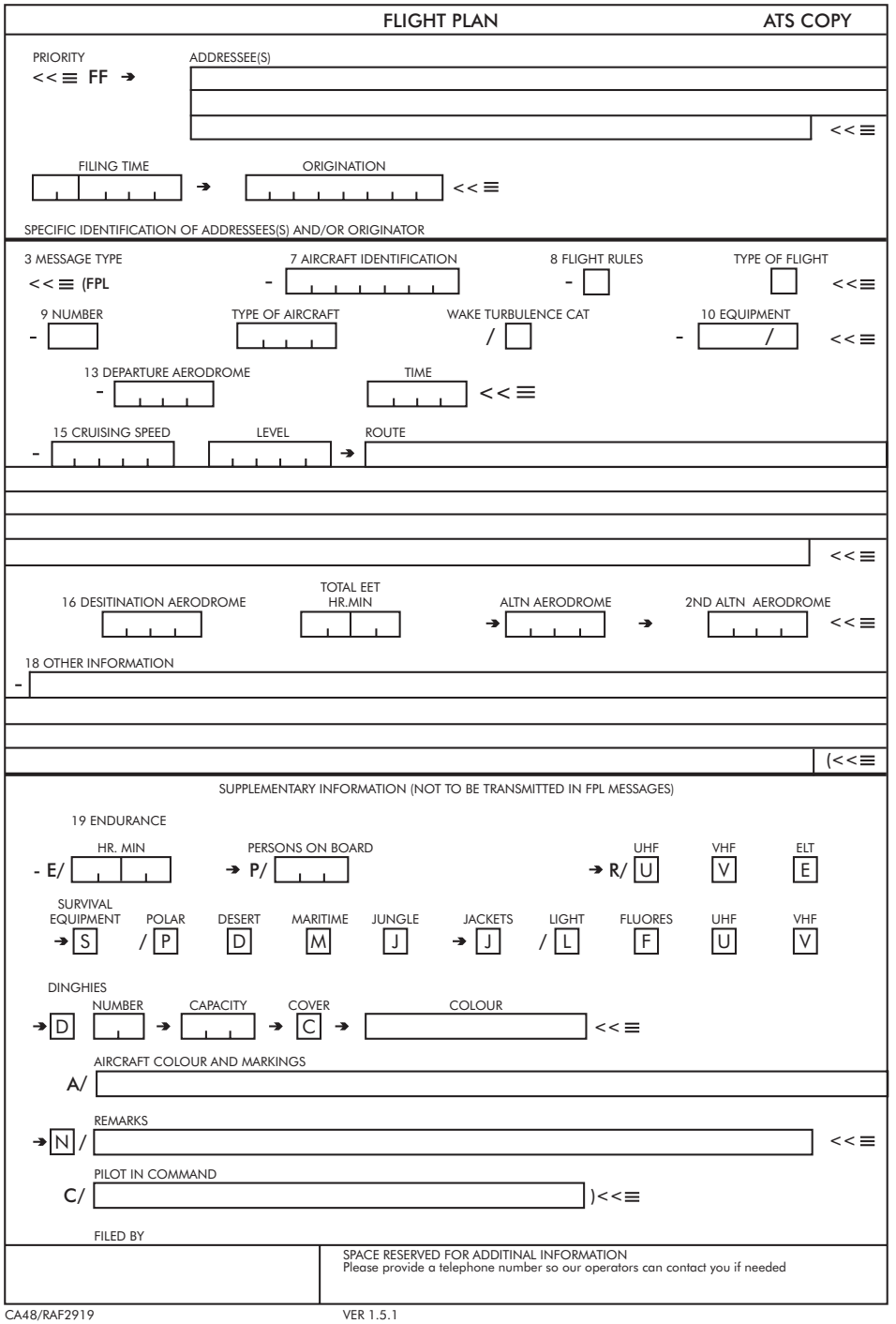

Fig. FP 2.1 ICAO model flight plan form (see Jeppesen student manual, ATC section)

Instructions for insertion of ATS data
Complete Items 7 to 18 as indicated hereunder.

Complete also Item 19 as indicated hereunder, when so required by the appropriate ATS authority or when otherwise deemed necessary.

Note
Item numbers on the form are not consecutive, as they correspond to Field Type numbers in ATS messages.

ITEM 7: AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION (MAXIMUM 7 CHARACTERS)

INSERT one of the following aircraft identifications, not exceeding 7 characters:

a) The registration marking of the aircraft (e.g. EIAKO, 4XBCD, N2567GA), when:

1) In radiotelephony the call sign to be used by the aircraft will consist of this identification alone (e.g. OOTEK), or preceded by the ICAO telephony designator for the aircraft operating agency (e.g. SABENA OOTEK);

2) The aircraft is not equipped with radio; OR

b) The ICAO designator for the aircraft operating agency followed by the flight identification (e.g. KLM51I, NGA2I3, JTR25) when in radiotelephony the call sign to be used by the aircraft will consist of the ICAO telephony designator for the operating agency followed by the flight identification (e.g. KLM5I 1, NIGERIA 213, HERBIE 25).

Note
Provisions for the use of radiotelephony call signs are contained in Annex 10, Volume II, Chapter 5. ICAO designators and telephony designators for aircraft operating agencies are contained in Doc 8585 — Designators for Aircraft Operating Agencies, Aeronautical Authorities and Services.

ITEM 8: FLIGHT RULES AND TYPE OF FLIGHT (ONE OR TWO CHARACTERS)
Flight rules:

INSERT one of the following letters to denote the category of flight rules with which the pilot intends to comply:

I	if IFR
V	if VFR
Y	if IFR first
Z	if VFR first and specify in item 15, the point or points, where a change in flight rules is planned

Type of flight:

INSERT one of the following letters to denote the type of flight when so required by the appropriate ATS authority:

S	if scheduled air service
N	if non-scheduled air transport operation
G	if general aviation
M	if military
X	if other than any of the defined categories above

ITEM 9: NUMBER AND TYPE OF AIRCRAFT AND WAKE TURBULENCE CATEGORY

Number of aircraft (1 or 2 characters)

INSERT the number of aircraft, if more than one.

Type of aircraft (2 to 4 characters)

INSERT the appropriate designator as specified in ICAO Doc 8643, *Aircraft Type Designators,*

OR, if no such designator has been assigned, or in case of formation flights comprising more than one type,

INSERT ZZZZ, and *SPECIFY* in Item 18, the (numbers and) type(s) of aircraft preceded by TYP/

Wake turbulence category (1 character)

INSERT behind the oblique stroke one of the following letters to indicate the wake turbulence category of the aircraft:

H - HEAVY, to indicate an aircraft type with a maximum certificated take-off mass of 136 000 kg or more;

M - MEDIUM, to indicate an aircraft type with a maximum certificated take-off mass of less than 136 000 kg but more than 7000 kg;
L - LIGHT, to indicate an aircraft type with a maximum certificated take-off mass of 7000 kg or less.

ITEM 10: EQUIPMENT

Radio communication, navigation and approach aid equipment

INSERT one letter as follows:

N - if no COM/NAV/approach aid equipment for the route to be flown is carried, or the equipment is unserviceable, *OR*
S if standard COM/NAV/approach aid equipment for the route to be flown is carried and serviceable *(see Note 1),*

AND/OR

INSERT one or more of the following letters to indicate the COM/NAV/approach aid equipment available and serviceable:

A (Not allocated)	O VOR
B (Not allocated)	P (Not allocated)
C LORAN C	Q (Not allocated)
D DME	R RNP type certification
E (Not allocated)	
F ADF *(see Note 5)*	T TACAN
G (GNSS)	U UHF RTF
H HF RTF	V VHF RTF
I Inertial Navigation	W } when
J (Data Link)*(see Note 3)*	X } prescribed
K (MLS)	Y } by ATS
L ILS	Z Other equipment
M Omega	carried *(see Note 2)*

Note 1
Standard equipment is considered to be VHF RTF, ADF, VOR and ILS, unless another combination is prescribed by the appropriate ATS authority.

Note 2
If the letter Z is used, specify in Item 18 the other equipment carried, preceded by COM/ and/or NAV/, as appropriate.

Note 3
If the letter J is used, specify in Item 18 the equipment carried, preceded by DAT/ followed by one or more letters as appropriate.

Note 4
Information on navigation capability is provided to ATC for clearance and routing purposes.

Note 5
Inclusion of letter R indicates that an aircraft meets the RNP type prescribed for the route segment(s), route(s) and/or area concerned.
Surveillance equipment

INSERT one or two of the following letters to describe the serviceable surveillance equipment carried:

SSR equipment

FOLLOWING THE OBLIQUE STROKE

N	Nil
A	Transponder - Mode A (4096 codes)
C	Transponder - Mode A (4096 codes) and Mode C
X	Transponder - Mode S without both aircraft identification and pressure-altitude transmission
P	Transponder - Mode S, including pressure-altitude transmission, but no aircraft identification transmission
I	Transponder - Mode S, including aircraft identification transmission, but no pressure-altitude transmission
S	Transponder - Mode S, including both pressure-altitude and aircraft identification transmission.

ADS equipment
D ADS capability

ITEM 13: DEPARTURE AERODROME AND TIME (8 CHARACTERS)

INSERT the ICAO four-letter location indicator of the departure aerodrome,

OR if no location indicator has been assigned,

INSERT ZZZZ and SPECIFY, in Item 18, the name of the aerodrome preceded by DEP/
OR, if the flight plan is received from an aircraft in flight,

INSERT AFIL, and SPECIFY, in Item 18, the ICAO four-letter location indicator of the location of the ATS unit from which supplementary flight plan data can be obtained, preceded by DEP/

THEN, WITHOUT A SPACE,
INSERT for a flight plan submitted before departure, the estimated off-block time,

OR, for a flight plan received from an aircraft in flight, the actual or estimated time over the first point of the route to which the flight plan applies.

ITEM 15: CRUISING SPEED, LEVEL, ROUTE

INSERT the *first cruising speed* as in (a) and the *first cruising level* as in (b), without a space between them.

THEN, following the arrow, *INSERT* the route description as in (c).

(a) Cruising speed (maximum 5 characters)
INSERT the *True Air Speed* for the first or the whole cruising portion of the flight, in terms of:

Kilometres per hour, expressed as K followed by 4 figures (e.g. K0830), *or*

Knots, expressed as N followed by 4 figures (e.g. *N0485), or*
Mach number, when so prescribed by the appropriate ATS authority, to the nearest hundredth of unit Mach, expressed as M followed by 3 figures (e.g.M082).

(b) Cruising level (maximum 5 characters)

INSERT the planned cruising level for the first or the whole portion of the route to be flown, in terms of:

Flight level, expressed as F followed by 3 figures (e.g. F085; F330), *or*
- *Standard Metric Level in tens of metres,* expressed as S followed by 4 figures (e.g. S1130), *or*
- When so prescribed by the appropriate ATS authorities

Altitude in hundreds of feet, expressed as A followed by 3 figures (e.g. A045; A100), *or*

Altitude in tens of metres, expressed as M followed by 4 figures (e.g. M0840), *or*

for uncontrolled VFR flights, the letters VFR.

(c) Route (including changes of speed, level and/or flight rules)

Flights along designated ATS routes

INSERT if the departure aerodrome is located on or connected to the ATS route, the designator of the first ATS route,

OR, if the departure aerodrome is not on or connected to the ATS route, the letters DCT followed by the point of joining the first ATS route, followed by the designator of the ATS route.

THEN

INSERT each point at which either a change of speed or level, a change of ATS route, and/or a change of flight rules is planned,

Note
When a transition is planned between a lower and upper ATS route and the routes are oriented in the same direction, the point of transition need not be inserted.
FOLLOWED IN EACH CASE

by the designator of the next ATS route segment, even if the same as the previous one,
OR by DCT, if the flight to the next point will be outside a designated route, unless both points are defined by geographical coordinates.