



## Ground Operations

23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024

ASGrOps\_OSI\_048

Version 3.0

# Operational Safety Instruction

## Aircraft Diversion Procedures

It is the responsibility of all employers to ensure that relevant OSIs are brought to the attention of their staff. However, individuals remain responsible for their own actions and those who are in any doubt should consult their Supervisor or Manager.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Instruction outlines the procedures and communication channels that should be used to reduce the operational impacts as a result of an inbound aircraft diversion.
- 1.2 Due to limitation, excessive flight diversions would impact the scheduled flight operations at Heathrow Airport. Therefore, only aircraft with genuine needs will be allowed to use Heathrow Airport as an alternative, for example during an emergency or under any other inevitable circumstances. The Airport Operations Duty Manager (AODM) has the ultimate decision.
- 1.3 It is crucial that Airlines, Handlers, and Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) work collaboratively to reduce any potential disruption. As outlined in the GOL, AOL and the Conditions of Use, all operating companies are tasked with the responsibility to make every reasonable effort to support diverted flights to Heathrow Airport. This support is provided in accordance with the standard International Air Transport Association (IATA) aircraft ground service pricing tables.
- 1.4 However, nothing in this procedure shall prevent an aircraft that has declared an emergency from landing.
- 1.5 Red bars have been added to the left-hand side of this document to draw the reader's attention to where changes or clarifications have been incorporated.
- 1.6 Reference must also be made to the UK Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP), EGLL AD 2.20 – Local Aerodrome Regulations, Paragraph H, with respect to Diversion Procedures at Heathrow.
- 1.7 AsGrOps\_OSI\_048 v2.0 is hereby cancelled.



## 2. Definitions

Abbreviation	Description
AfDM	Airfield Duty Manager
AIP	Aeronautical Information Publication
ATC	Air Traffic Control
AODM	Aircraft Operations Duty Manager
AOL	Airside Operations License
GOL	Ground Operations License
HAL	Heathrow Airport Limited
IATA	International Air Transport Association
NATS	National Air Traffic Services

## 3. Diversion Procedures

- 3.1** Airlines and other operators are advised to avoid filing London Heathrow as an alternate. However, if an airline needs to divert to Heathrow, they are required to have made the necessary arrangements for ground handling with an airline from the appropriate terminal.
- 3.2** Airlines and Handling Agents are required to inform the AODM of any anticipated inbound diversions, whether that involves their own aircraft, or those they handle.
- 3.3** For a diversion to be considered, the operator must comply with the requirements laid out in the Conditions of Use and the UK AIP. The AODM will also consider the following:
1. The airline must have a commercial contract with a ground handler at Heathrow.
  2. The Ground Handling Agent must be capable of handling the aircraft type.
  3. The Airline or Ground Handling Agent must be signed up to either the Aircraft Recovery Scheme or be able to provide full aircraft recovery themselves.

Where recovery arrangements are not in place, the airline must be able to provide an indemnity to allow HAL or its appointed agents to recover the aircraft and return the airfield to normal operations. If Heathrow needs to recover costs, it shall do so as according to the Conditions of Use.

- 3.4** If the aircraft has the potential to obstruct a runway, Heathrow may ask the Airline or Handling Agent to consider using an alternative airport. It is important to highlight that this procedure does not prohibit an aircraft that has declared an emergency from landing.
- 3.5** The ability of Heathrow to accept diversions will depend on a number of factors, including stand availability and terminal capacity.
- 3.6** During period of disruption where the airport operations capacity is limited, Heathrow will refuse diversions and may suspend any ad-hoc slots.



- 3.7** Airline and other aircraft operators are advised that prior to landing, arrangements for ground handling must have been agreed with an approved Handling Agent from the appropriate terminal. It should be noted that during the night period, ground handling facilities are very limited without prior arrangement.
- 3.8** Airlines and Handling Agents must agree only to handle diversions that can be accommodated within their resources. The Handling Agent must be able to provide ground service equipment, engineering and towing services for the diverted aircraft.
- 3.9** Diverted aircraft are likely to be allocated to a remote stand, in order to minimise the impact on the scheduled operation.

#### 4. Plan 39

- 4.1** Plan 39 is invoked by NATS Terminal Control when an unexpected event occurs at an airport within the London Terminal Manoeuvring Area which could lead to multiple diversions. Plan 39 outlines the number, type and Airlines which each airport has agreed to pre-authorise, accept and which may be diverted without any further consultation with the Aerodrome Authority. The number, type and Airlines are agreed between Heathrow and NATS Airports Interface. Any additional diversions above those outlined in Plan 39 would be coordinated between the AODM and ATC.
- 4.2** If Plan 39 is activated, the Airside community will be notified via the AOP.
- 4.3** When Plan 39 has ceased, Airlines should ensure that Target Off Block Times are updated as required to support an accurate demand picture.

#### 5. Key Contacts

- 5.1** Heathrow Aircraft Operations Unit:  
AODM – 020 8757 3501  
[AODM@heathrow.com](mailto:AODM@heathrow.com)
- 5.2** Heathrow Airfield Operations:  
AfDM – 020 8745 7373  
[airfield.duty.manager@heathrow.com](mailto:airfield.duty.manager@heathrow.com)
- 5.3** Airport Coordination Limited:  
Urgent slot requests during office hours – 020 8564 0613.  
For out of office hours, contact the AODM.

#### 6. Enquiries

Any enquiries regarding this Instruction should be addressed to the Aircraft Operations Duty Manager, Telephone 020 8757 3501.



## 7. References

UK Aeronautical Information Publication AIP, EGLL AD 2.20 – Local Traffic Regulation,  
Paragraph H  
Heathrow Conditions of Use



## Document Data

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## Document History

Revision	Description of Change	Date
v1.0	Original to new template	14 <sup>th</sup> August 2017
v2.0	Update to OSI carried out by Caroline Kelly	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2019
v3.0	Full document review, updated introduction, diversion procedures and key contacts. Added Plan 39 in new section.	23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2024

