



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Washington, D.C. 20594

March 26, 2020

Attachment 10 – Trans States Airlines Dispatch Operations Manual [Excerpts]

OPERATIONAL FACTORS

DCA16LA100

1-1.3 Responsibility for Operational Control Domestic Operations

14CFR 121.533(a)(b)(c)(1)(2)(3)

The Director of Flight Operations is directly responsible for operational control of the airline. Through the authority granted by the Director of Flight Operations the Dispatch office maintains daily operational control of all Trans States Airlines aircraft movements.

The Pilot in Command and the Dispatcher are jointly responsible for the preflight planning, delay and dispatch release of a flight in compliance with this manual, all company policies, procedures, applicable CFRs, and in accordance with the Operation Specifications.

The Dispatcher is responsible for monitoring the progress of each flight. Prior to and during the flight, the Dispatcher is responsible for providing to the Captain all available current information that may affect the safety of the flight. The Dispatcher has the authority to cancel, delay, or re-dispatch a flight if, in the Dispatcher's or Captain's opinion the flight cannot operate safely as planned or released.

Trans States Airlines is currently approved to conduct Domestic, Flag and Supplemental Operations. Trans States does not currently conduct any Flag Operations. All flights to other countries are currently conducted using domestic rules via the authority provided by OP SPEC A012. Prior to initiating any Flag Operations, Trans States, in cooperation with Federal Authorities, will develop and publish needed DISP guidance for the conduct of such operations. (See also SAM 0-0.1.1)

1-1.7.6 Operations in Strong Surface Winds

14CFR 121.101(d), OP SPEC A010

Operations when surface winds exceed 50 knots requires the approval of the Director of Flight Operations (or delegate). Operations shall be suspended when surface winds exceed 65 knots. (Ref FCOM 3-2.7)

1-1.7.7 Windshear and Microburst

14CFR 121.101(d), OP SPEC A010

To ensure safety, Trans States Airlines shall take extra vigilance when dispatching aircraft into areas with forecasted Windshear and/or probability of Microbursts. The Dispatcher should provide additional briefing to pilots when necessary during these conditions (Reference DPPM 2-15 Verbal Weather Briefing). Microbursts and Windshear can occur at varying distances ahead of a thunderstorm. Dry microbursts can also occur, especially in mountainous areas. Microbursts and Windshear can exceed aircraft climb capability and many air carrier accidents have resulted from crews approaching or departing airports with strong thunderstorms approaching and proper windshear/microburst avoidance procedures were not utilized. (Ref FCOM 7-1.3)

2-1.15 Communication and Navigation Facilities

14CFR 91.131(c), 121.99(a)(b), 121.103, 121.121, 121.122(a), 121.127(a)(2), 121.607(a), 121.609, 121.711, OP SPECS A025, B035, C052

For aircraft equipped with ACARS, ACARS will be the primary communications system. ARINC will be used as the backup system as required under 14CFR 121.607. For aircraft not equipped with ACARS, ARINC will be the primary communications system. Both of these systems are independent of any system operated by the United States as required by 14CFR 121.99(b)/121.122(a).

Trans States Airlines utilizes ARINC phone patch service as well as ARINC Direct Dial Press to Talk (PRESTO). Specific instructions and required flight crew communications may be found in AGS 1-5. ACARS, ARINC, and station to aircraft communication enables Trans States Airlines rapid and reliable communications. §121.607/121.609 states no person may dispatch an airplane over an approved route or route segment unless the communication and navigation facilities required by §121.99/121.121/121.122 and 121.103 are in satisfactory operating condition. §121.609 states no person may release an aircraft over any route or route segment unless communication and navigation facilities equal to those required by §121.121 are in satisfactory operating condition. The communication system ensures rapid and reliable 2-way communication over the entire route to be flown, between the aircraft and the Dispatch office, (providing an effective and timely method to disseminate the potential effects of adverse weather to flight crews), and between each aircraft and the appropriate air traffic control unit.

Trans States Airlines in conducting supplemental or domestic operations has, for each proposed route, non-visual ground aids that are (1) Available over the route for navigating within the degree of accuracy required for ATC and (2) located to allow navigation to any regular, provisional, refueling or alternate airport, within the degree of accuracy necessary for the operation involved. Trans States Airlines does not utilize celestial navigation, or operate on VFR routes, therefore non-visual aids are always required. Particular emphasis is placed on reviewing NOTAMs covering navigational aids enroute to landing destinations. Flights may use GPS-based navigation to supplement standard navigation while enroute, or be dispatched on a route which is wholly predicated on the use of GPS-based navigation.

All ACARS messaging is archived by ARINC for a period of 93 days. All ARINC radio calls are archived by ARINC for 45 days.

2-1.17 **Communications**

14CFR 121.542

It is the responsibility of the Captain to see that the Air/Ground Communication System is monitored. If ACARS is deferred, the flight crew shall maintain a listening watch on ARINC as long as it does not conflict with ATC communications or jeopardize the sterile cockpit. (Ref FCOM 3-1.12.6)

If a flight is going to be over ten (10) minutes late on a previous estimated arrival, the Company should be given the new ETA as soon as possible.

2-1.19 **Non-Safety of Flight Communications**

Dispatch utilizes the Aircraft Situational Display (ASD) to determine the aircraft position prior to initiating a radio call to ensure the flight is not in Sterile Cockpit (FCOM 3-2.6). In the event that the ASD is unavailable, Dispatch shall make a reasonable determination to its position. Upon establishing contact thru ARINC, ACARS or Station Relay, should the flight crew indicate they are in a critical stage of flight cease contact immediately.

4-1 WEATHER

4-1.1 Familiarity of Weather Conditions

14CFR 121.599(a)

Domestic Operations. No aircraft Dispatcher shall release a flight unless he is thoroughly familiar with reported and forecast weather conditions on the route to be flown.

For Supplemental Operations see FCOM 6-1.

4-1.3 Approved Weather Sources

14CFR 121.101(a)(b)(1)(c)(d), 121.119, OP SPEC A10

Approved weather sources for Trans States Airlines are found in EWINS 2.1.1.
(Reference OPS SPEC A010)

4-1.13 Alternate Airport for Destination (IFR Domestic)

14CFR 91.169(b), 121.619(a)(b)(c), 121.625, OP SPECS C055, C070

No person may dispatch an aircraft under IFR unless one alternate airport for each destination is listed in the dispatch release. When the weather conditions for the destination and first alternate airport are marginal at least one additional alternate must be designated. However, no alternate airport is required if: For at least 1 hour before and 1 hour after the estimated time of arrival at the destination airport the appropriate weather reports or forecast, or any combination thereof, indicate that the ceiling will be at least 2,000 feet above the airport elevation and the visibility will be at least 3 miles.

The weather conditions at the alternate airport at the estimated time of arrival must meet the requirements as listed in OP SPEC C055 and in determining alternate airport minimums the Dispatcher (and/or pilot) must not use any published instrument approach procedure that specifies that alternate airport weather minimums are not authorized (N/A).

No person may dispatch a flight unless each required alternate airport is listed in the dispatch release.

The alternate airport must be verified by the Dispatcher as listed in OP SPEC C070 and authorized for that particular operation.

Note: Alternate airport for destination requirements when operating into Canada can be found in IPM 1-5.

Note: The use of navigation (RNAV) instrument approach procedures in determining minimums is limited to destination airport or alternate(s). The dispatch cannot be based on RNAV only approaches at both the destination and alternate airports. (Ref AIM 1-1-18 Item g.1)

5-1 FUEL

5-1.1 Fuel Supply: Domestic and Supplemental Operations

14CFR 121.639(a)(b)(c), 121.643(a), 121.645(e), 121.647

1. All Trans States Airlines flights must be fueled for safe operation in accordance with appropriate CFRs, airplane flight manuals, operating manuals, and actual weather/wind conditions. Reference DISP 5-1.3 on Fuel Definitions. The Captain is charged with the direct responsibility of ensuring that the actual fuel load on board the aircraft is appropriate for safe operation prior to departure. The Captain and the Dispatcher prior to departure must agree upon any modification to the fuel requirements as stated on the dispatch release. Each Dispatcher shall consider the following when calculating fuel:
 - A. Actual wind and enroute weather conditions that deviate from average characteristics.
 - B. Anticipated traffic delays.
 - C. One approach and possible missed approach at destination.
 - D. Any other conditions that may delay landing of the aircraft.

For the purposes of this section, required fuel is in addition to unusable fuel.

2. No person may dispatch or takeoff an aircraft unless it has enough fuel to:
 - A. Fly to the airport to which it is dispatched,
 - B. Thereafter, to fly to and land at the most distant alternate airport (where required for domestic operations, but always required for supplemental operations), taking into account anticipated air traffic control routing; and
 - C. Thereafter to fly for 45 minutes at normal cruising fuel consumption.

Note 1: The routing filed in the flight plan shall be the basis for computing distance and fuel. This route shall be a preferential route (if one exists for this leg) or one acceptable to ATC. A direct route shall be used only if it is preferential or acceptable to ATC. All other factors effecting potential routing changes, such as circumnavigating existing or forecast weather, shall also be considered.

6-1.25 Release from Other than Regular Airports

The dispatch release from other than regular airports shall be in the same manner as DISP 6-1.21, "Release from Trans States Stations".

6-1.27 Detailed Flight Plan Information

Reference FCOM 3-4.8 for detailed flight plan information.

6-1.29 Flight Weather Document

14CFR 121.443, 121.539, 121.695, OP SPEC A010

- A. Weather information used by Trans States Airlines for flight movement under CFR Part 121 shall include the latest available information issued by the National Weather Service, or a source approved by the National Weather Service, or a source approved by the FAA. The latest available weather information for the purpose of flight dispatch and for flight operations must include a minimum of the following:
1. Surface observations (METAR), specials, recorded specials and PIREPS for departure, destination, alternate and selected enroute airports.
 2. Terminal forecasts (TAF) or amendments for destination and alternate airports.
 3. Forecast winds and temperatures aloft for the flight planned route. Frontal systems, and the use of actual and prognostic weather charts.
 4. SIGMETs, or Convective SIGMETs for the flight planned route, if applicable.
 5. NOTAMs.

Note: The Flight Weather Document is the normal means of providing a briefing to the Pilot in Command. The Dispatcher can provide or the Pilot in Command can request a verbal weather briefing in addition to the Flight Weather Document as necessary.

- B. For flight operations conducted under 14CFR Part 121 and which are authorized by a company dispatcher and a dispatch release document, a flight weather document containing all items in paragraph A of this section will accompany the dispatch release document. The flight weather document shall remain with the dispatch release document as required by DISP 2-1.11, Disposition of Flight Documents.
- C. The flight weather document shall contain the latest available Weather, NOTAM and SIGMET information at the time the Dispatch Release is printed. The Flight Weather document will be transmitted and retrieved in the same manner as the Dispatch Release (DISP 6-1.21) Weather, NOTAM and SIGMET information updates for the route of flight may be obtained via telephone, ACARS (if available) or any means available from National Weather Service approved sources. In addition, updates to the Flight Weather document may be retrieved by the flight crew without the need to contact the Dispatcher via use of the Sabre computer system. The necessary entries can be found in the Sabre Quick Reference Handbook.
- D. All weather documents compiled for the flight as required by 14CFR 121.695(a) and retained per 14CFR 121.695(b) shall be archived in the Sabre Flight Control Suite or American Airlines Sabre System, as appropriate.
- E. The Dispatcher is required to brief the captain and keep him/her advised after departure of hazardous weather conditions, including severe thunderstorms, wind shear and clear air turbulence that may affect the safety of the flight.

8-1 FLIGHT FOLLOWING/MONITORING

14CFR 121.125(a), 121.127, 121.533(c)(1), OP SPEC A008

In order to maintain quality control and ensure the highest level of safety the SOC has been outfitted with the latest technology and communication systems as approved in OP SPEC A008. The Dispatch Department utilizing the Sabre FlightTrac application monitors all Trans States operations. The Sabre application receives its OUT, OFF, ON, IN (OOOI) times directly from the ACARS units on the aircraft. Should an ACARS unit be deferred the Dispatcher shall place a remark on the flight release advising the flight crew to call their times into the station personnel. The station personnel shall then update the respective codeshare partner reservations system, which automatically updates FlightTrac. Fusion Aircraft Situation Display can also be used to monitor the progression of each flight. If any one of the systems fail the others can be used together to complete the process. Should all the systems fail it will be necessary to obtain the flights progress from the individual stations.

1. All Trans States flights are provided flight following by a qualified Dispatcher, who follows the flight to completion or until relieved by another qualified Dispatcher.
2. Monitoring of flights is provided by the Sabre FliteTrac system. FliteTrac receives flight information directly from Sabre, Shares or ACARS. All appropriate OUT/OFF, ON/IN times are entered by the departing or arriving station agents respectively. In the event of a FliteTrac failure, Sabre and Shares may be utilized directly for flight monitoring.
3. At anytime a Trans States scheduled flight is overdue by 15 minutes or a non-scheduled flight is overdue by 1 hour, Dispatch shall begin emergency locating procedures outlined in DISP 9-1.7.
4. If any system (Sabre, Shares or ACARS) is down, times shall be forwarded to Dispatch via teletype or telephone.
5. Changes to meteorological conditions shall be relayed to the Captain and in accordance with DISP 6-1.1, Information to Pilot in Command.

8-1.1 Change In Flight Plan

Reference FCOM 3-4.8 for Change in Flight Plan Information.

3-29 HOLDING FOR CONNECTING PASSENGERS

Stations may hold a flight for up to ten minutes beyond the scheduled departure time or ten minutes beyond the time it is ready for departure, whichever is later; however, in the event that the delay would cause a crew duty day issue, Dispatch shall have the final authority. Delays posted by the station are received electronically by Dispatch. The Duty Manager or Dispatcher must coordinate with Scheduling to determine if the delay adversely affects the crew's duty day or rest requirement and then contract the station if it is not viable to hold for the passengers. The station with Dispatch must always coordinate a delay in excess of ten minutes. If a station contacts Dispatch seeking an excessive delay, it would be permissible if:

1. It is in the best interest of the majority of passengers involved.
2. There is limited or no available later flights out of that station.
3. There are not weather or traffic conditions that might further delay the flight.
4. It will not adversely affect the line of flight for that aircraft and crew.
5. Dispatch has verified with Crew Scheduling that crew legalities will not be affected.

3-31 DEPARTING FIVE (5) MINUTES EARLY

Flights are allowed to depart 5 minutes prior to scheduled departure time without Dispatch authorization. If the flight is ready to depart and with the concurrence of station personnel, the Captain may elect to depart up to 5 minutes prior to scheduled departure. The Dispatcher must specifically authorize departures earlier than 5 minutes prior to scheduled departure. If a Dispatcher authorizes a departure of more than 5 minutes early, detailed information shall be noted in FliteTrac under the Supplemental Information (SI) tab.