

# NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.303

National Policy

Effective Date:  
5/19/15

Cancellation Date:  
5/19/16

**SUBJ:** OpSpecs A003, A014, A023, and B031 for Part 129

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**1. Purpose of This Notice.** This notice provides revised guidance for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) offices and inspectors with oversight responsibility for operators conducting airplane operations under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 129. This notice decommissions Operations Specification (OpSpec) A014, Special En Route Operations in Class G U.S. Airspace; OpSpec A023, Procedure for Determining Operations During Ground Icing Conditions; and OpSpec B031, VFR and IFR En Route Limitations and Provisions. This notice also amends OpSpec A003, Aircraft Authorization. Only the part 129 templates are affected.

**2. Audience.** The primary audience for this notice is International Field Offices (IFO), principal operations inspectors (POI), principal maintenance inspectors (PMI), and principal avionics inspectors (PAI) with oversight responsibility for operators issued OpSpecs under part 129. The secondary audience includes Flight Standards (AFS) branches and divisions in the regions and in headquarters (HQ).

**3. Where You Can Find This Notice.** You can find this notice on the MyFAA employee Web site at [https://employees.faa.gov/tools\\_resources/orders\\_notices](https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices). Inspectors can access this notice through the Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS) at <http://fsims.avs.faa.gov>. Air carriers (operators) can find this notice on the FAA's Web site at <http://fsims.faa.gov>. This notice is available to the public at [http://www.faa.gov/regulations\\_policies/orders\\_notices](http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices).

**4. Explanation of Policy Changes.** The International Programs and Policy Division (AFS-50) together with the Flight Technologies and Procedures Division (AFS-400) have decommissioned OpSpecs A014, A023, and B031, as well as amended OpSpec A003 for part 129, (the part 129 templates), to add clarity/transparency and remove requirements already covered by regulations. This change eliminates some of the duplications between OpSpecs as well as some of the cross referencing that makes understanding a carrier's limitations confusing.

**a. A014 Decommissioned.** Paragraphs 3 and 4 from OpSpec A014 were incorporated into OpSpec A003. The information in paragraph 1 was already covered by OpSpec A001. The information in paragraph 2 was redundant, as OpSpec B031 was incorporated into OpSpec A003.

**b. A023 Decommissioned.** The identification of Ground Deicing Program was incorporated into OpSpec A003. International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) Annex 6 relevant standards were added to the job aid. Since 14 CFR part 129 requires compliance with ICAO Annex 6, as does OpSpec A001, the specific standards were not incorporated into OpSpec A003. Inspector guidance relating to the Ground Deicing Program was updated.

**c. A003 Amended.** Inspector guidance was updated relating to the amendment. Additional selectable limitations were added to OpSpec A003 for en route and data link communications. Table 1 within the OpSpec was amended as follows:

- Added a Ground Deicing Program column with a Yes or No drop-down.
- Added two columns for Data Link
- Moved the limitation for aircraft without minimum equipment lists (MEL) to the end (fourth selectable).

**d. B031 Decommissioned.** OpSpec B031 did not limit visual-flight-rules (VFR)-only air carriers and aircraft to VFR-only operations, which gave some foreign air carriers the incorrect impression that, since they were authorized for this OpSpec, they were authorized to conduct both VFR and instrument flight rules (IFR) en route operations. Since VFR en route limitations contained in OpSpec B031 were duplicated in OpSpec B051 and OpSpec B056 they were not transferred over to OpSpec A003 for this change. IFR en route limitations were reviewed; the wording simplified and incorporated as selectable limitations to OpSpec A003.

**5. Action.** This is a mandatory change affecting principal inspectors (PI) with responsibility for the issuance, amendment, and oversight of OpSpecs for part 129, the part 129 templates. If previously issued, PIs must manually archive OpSpecs A014, A023, and B031, and reissue OpSpecs A003 and A004. This action must be accomplished within 180 calendar-days of the effective date of this notice, when terminal operations using data link communications are authorized, or at such a time that OpSpec A004 is being reissued (e.g., when authorizing a new optional OpSpec), whichever occurs first.

**Note:** PIs may find instructions in Web-based Operations Safety System (WebOPSS) by selecting OpSpec A003 in any of the certificate-holding district office (CHDO) grids (Available, Workspace, Issues and Archived) and clicking on the “Guidance” button.

**6. Disposition.** We will incorporate the information in this notice into FAA Order 8900.1 before this notice expires. Please direct any questions or comments concerning the information in this notice to the International Operations Branch (AFS-52) at 202-267-0923.

ORIGINAL SIGNED by

/s/ John Barbagallo  
Deputy Director, Flight Standards Service

**Appendix A. Sample OpSpec A003, Aircraft Authorized for Operations to the United States: 14 CFR Part 129**

a. The foreign air carrier is authorized to conduct its operations in the United States using only the following:

**Table 1 – Authorized Aircraft, Configuration, Conditions and Certain Operations**

Aircraft				Configuration, Conditions and Certain Operations Authorized					Data Link	
Aircraft M/M/S	Serial Number	Registration Number	Configuration	En Route	Condition of Flight	Part 36 (Noise)	RVSM	Ground Deicing Program	Data Link System	Communication System
[LOAD]	[LOAD]	[LOAD]	[LOAD]	[LOAD]	[LOAD]	[LOAD]	[Drop down list] Yes No	[Drop down list] Yes No	[Drop down list] FANS-1A FANS-1A+ Not authorized	[Drop down list] VDL Mode 0/A VDL Mode 2 Not applicable

b. Limitations and Conditions. The following authorizations and limitations apply:

(1) All State of the Operator more restrictive limitations apply.

*(SELECT the first option if the foreign air carrier is authorized VFR en route operations ONLY. SELECT the second option if the foreign air carrier is authorized for IFR en route operations. IF VFR en route operations selected, skip to subparagraph b(3)—Data Link options.)*

(2) The foreign air carrier is authorized VFR en route operations only.

(2) IFR En Route Operations. IFR en route provisions must be met.

(a) When conducting IFR Class I navigation:

(i) An aircraft’s position must be “reliably fixed” as necessary to navigate to the degree of accuracy required for Air Traffic Control

(ATC).

(ii) The airways used must lie within the operational service volume of the facilities defining the airways or off-airway routing with the following exception: operations over routes with a minimum en route altitude (MEA) gap (or International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) equivalent).

(iii) The facilities which define an airway must be used as the primary navigation reference except as follows: An area navigation system may be used if the aircraft's position can be "reliably fixed" at least once each hour using airway navigation facilities to the degree of accuracy required for ATC. This system must be certificated for use in IFR flight for the conduct of Class I navigation over the routes being flown and authorized in accordance with paragraph B035.

(b) Except in Class G airspace, operate IFR flights:

(i) Over routing predicated on ATC radar vectoring services.

(ii) Over off-airway routings, which are predicated on airways navigation facilities, (including flights to alternate or diversionary airports), provided the following conditions are met:

(A) Airways navigation facilities must be the primary navigation reference for these off-airway routings and the off-airway routings must lie within the operational service volume of the facilities used. Such off-airway operation must be authorized by the appropriate ATC facility.

(B) The operation must be conducted in accordance with the route width and MEA criteria prescribed for or applied to the foreign air carrier by the appropriate ICAO contracting state.

*(IF the foreign air carrier is authorized for IFR en route operations in subparagraph b(2), SELECT one of the following options for subparagraph b(2)(c)—Class G airspace authorization: IF Class G airspace is NOT authorized, SELECT the FIRST option; IF Class G airspace is authorized, SELECT the second option.)*

(c) The foreign air carrier is not authorized to conduct IFR en route operations in Class G airspace.

(c) For IFR en route in Class G, the facilities and services necessary to safely conduct operations in Class G airspace must be available and operational during the period of operation in Class G airspace.

*(IF the foreign air carrier is authorized for IFR en route operations in Class G airspace in subparagraph b(2)(c), SELECT one of the following options for subparagraph b(2)(c)(i) for whether operations must be conducted under instrument flight rules, visual flight rules or either. SELECT the first option for instrument flight rules ONLY. SELECT the second option for visual flight rules. SELECT the third option for either instrument or visual.)*

- (i) IFR en route operations in Class G must be conducted under instrument flight rules.
- (i) IFR en route operations in Class G may be conducted under visual flight rules.
- (i) IFR en route operations in Class G may be conducted under instrument flight rules or visual flight rules.

*(SELECT the first option for subparagraph b(3) if the foreign air carrier is NOT authorized to use data link communications to pick up departure clearances at U.S. airports. SELECT the second option if the foreign air carrier is authorized to use data link communications to pick up departure clearances at U.S. airports.)*

- (3) The foreign air carrier is not authorized data link communications.
- (3) Data Link Communications. Terminal operations using data link communications within the U.S. where the air traffic service (ATS) infrastructure supports the use of Future Air Navigation System (FANS-1/A or equivalent) air traffic control data link equipment must be conducted in accordance with the following:
  - (a) Data link communications may be conducted only during ground operations and the terminal phase of flight (departures and arrivals) as applicable in U.S. airspace.
  - (b) Data link operations are conducted in an environment where air traffic surveillance is available (e.g., radar or ADS-B).
  - (c) Data link messages with ATS may be used as a supplement to voice communications. Voice communications must be continually monitored since there is still a requirement for the aircraft to be equipped with operating VHF voice and, when required, HF voice radios along the entire route of flight.
  - (d) Flightcrew members have completed the State of the Operator approved training program prior to conducting data link operations. Flightcrew members are familiar with and comply with:
    - (i) All STC and AFM limitations.

(ii) All provisions applicable to the use and operation of the installed data link system.

(iii) Regulations, policies and procedures applicable in the United States and/or Flight Information Regions, as published in documents such as Aeronautical Information Publications and NOTAMS.

(iv) Policy and procedures related to the U.S. Departure Clearance Service (DCL) trials detailed in the following:

(A) DCL New Airline Participation Document.

(B) Data Communications Implementation Team (DCIT) DCL Flight Deck User Guide.

(C) DCIT DCL Trials Management Plan.

(D) Operator DCL Flight Manual Bulletins for each aircraft type participating.

(e) The foreign air carrier has incorporated into their maintenance program the data link equipment or systems manufacturer's requirements for maintenance, and instructions for continued airworthiness for the data link equipment and aircraft listed in the table above. This includes cleaning, inspection, adjusting, testing, lubricating, and any other specified requirements.

*(Check the following box for subparagraph b(4) IF the foreign air carrier has aircraft without an MEL. Then use the field below to identify the specific aircraft.)*

(4) The following aircraft listed below do not have a Minimum Equipment List (MEL). Accordingly, the foreign air carrier must not take off the following aircraft with inoperable instruments or equipment installed.

*(ENTER aircraft without an MEL into Textbox.)*