



Sunny Swift

"TAF, what it means in practice"

AT AN AERODROME METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE, A METEOROLOGIST IS PREPARING TAFS (AERODROME FORECASTS)

FOR THE AERODROME, THE MOST LIKELY CLOUD BETWEEN 0900 UTC AND 1800 UTC WILL BE SCT* AT 1 200 FT, AND BKN* AT 3 000 FT

* FEW=1-2 OKTAS (EIGHTHS), SCT=3-4 OKTAS, BKN=5-7 OKTAS, OVC=8 OKTAS

A LITTLE LATER, TWO PILOTS...

TAF EGHJ 220800Z 2209/2218 20005KT 9999 SCT012 BKN030=

THE SOUTHAMPTON TAF GIVES SCT012 AND BKN030. THE CLOUD IS NOT GREAT, BUT IT'S OK FOR ME

WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL MINIMA?

>2 000 FT CEILING, > 10 KM VISIBILITY, < 10 KT CROSSWIND

I'VE NEVER REALLY BEEN SURE ABOUT HOW THEY WORK

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT HOW THE CLOUD OR WIND SPEED MIGHT CHANGE? THERE ARE RULES FOR INDICATING CHANGES IN TAFS

WELL, THERE ARE SOME KEY POINTS. TAFS ARE **PRIMARILY FOR IFR FLIGHTS**, AND THEY FORECAST THE **MOST LIKELY CONDITIONS**. ANY CHANGES OR AMENDMENTS ARE BASED ON THRESHOLDS FOR WIND, VISIBILITY, CLOUDS AND WEATHER. CHECK YOUR AIP, OR ASK THE MET SERVICE PROVIDER FOR DETAILS

FOR EXAMPLE, SEE THIS ROW ABOUT THE CLOUD BASE, FROM THE TAF AMENDMENT THRESHOLDS TABLE

SO THE CLOUD BASE FORECAST MAY HAVE DESCENDED FROM 3 000 FT TO 1 500 FT, WITHOUT THE TAF BEING AMENDED

THAT'S RIGHT. IT WOULD BRING YOU BELOW YOUR MINIMUM. IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE CLOSE TO HAND - CONSULT THE AIP AND TABULATE THE TAF CHANGE CRITERIA**

Forecast height (above aerodrome level)	TAF encoding for BKN or OVC Note: 1	Meaning
1 500 ft (Note:2) and above; or 'no significant cloud' (NSC)	BKN015 or OVC015 and higher; or NSC	For example: BKN030, or 'NSC' in a TAF means that the actual cloud base may be BKN at 1 500 ft or higher or OVC at 1 500 ft or higher
1 000 ft to 1 400 ft	BKN010 or OVC010 to	For example: BKN012 in a TAF means that the actual cloud base may be:

Forecast Weather below 10000

** SEE LINKS TO TAF AMENDMENT THRESHOLDS IN THE RELATED CONTENTS SECTION

ALSO, TAFS ONLY INCLUDE CHANGES IF THE PROBABILITY OF THE CHANGES IS 30 % OR MORE

...SO IF THE PROBABILITY OF THE CLOUD BASE BECOMING BKN014 OR LOWER WERE LESS THAN 30 %, THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE TO THE TAF?

CORRECT, 30 % IS A PROBABILITY. SO THINK OF 30 % AS MEANING THAT ON 3 OUT OF 10 OCCASIONS, THE CHANGE WILL OCCUR

READ THE TAF IN COMBINATION WITH THE AREA FORECASTS FOR LOW-LEVEL FLIGHTS AND THE METAR. IF THEY SUGGEST WORSE WEATHER CONDITIONS THAN THE TAF, YOU CAN ALWAYS CONTACT THE METEOROLOGIST

HOW SHOULD I PLAN FOR UNCERTAINTIES IN THE WEATHER FORECAST?

BE AWARE OF THEM, AND ANTICIPATE POSSIBLE CHANGES. KEEP A MARGIN ON YOUR PERSONAL MINIMA, AND PREPARE A PLAN B IN CASE THINGS GET TIGHT EN-ROUTE. BE STRICT AND READY TO CANCEL OR REPROGRAM BEFORE COMPROMISING YOUR MINIMA.

REMEMBER THE SERA REGULATION FOR VISUAL METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS AND THE COUNTRY-SPECIFIC VMC IN THE AIPs.

You can find links to

- Weather references
- Regulations

in the "related content" section

Please send your comments and ideas to generalaviation@easa.europa.eu

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