European Union Aviation Safety Agency

Airspace Usage requirements – DLS/CPDLC (controller-pilot data link communication)

Where do I find a copy of the Commission Regulation (EC) No 29/2009 known as the DLS IR?

Answer

The Commission Regulation (EC) No 29/2009 can be found on the EASA website on the 'Regulations' page under:

- ATM/ANS interoperability - Air Traffic Management/Air Navigation Services

The latest consolidated version can be found on EUR-Lex:

- https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02009R0029-20…

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Link:
https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115354

What is the DLS IR applicability?

Answer

The DLS IR is applicable to all IFR (Instrument flight rule) GAT (general air traffic) flights operating above FL 285 within airspace as identified in Annex I of the regulation.

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Link:
https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115355

What is the DLS IR mandating for operators?

Answer

The DLS IR mandates CPDLC (controller pilot data link communication) capability for aircraft operating above FL 285. Aircraft capability is understood as the aircraft being properly equipped and fight crew appropriately trained as agreed with the operator's Competent Authority.

Note: CPDLC operation does not require a specific approval in accordance with Part-SPA of the Commission Regulation (EU) 965/2012.

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https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115356

If my aircraft installation is compliant with the DLS IR requirements, however the flight crew is not trained, what do I indicate in the flight plan?

Answer

As CPDLC capability requires both aircraft equipage and appropriately trained flight crew, if one of these conditions is **not** fulfilled, operators should not indicate CPDLC ATN (Aeronautical Telecommunication Network) VDL (Very High Frequency Data Link) Mode 2 capability in the flight plan. Furthermore, in that case operators should not plan flights above FL285 in the applicable airspace.

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If I am not compliant with the DLS IR requirements, may I file the flight plan above FL 285?

Answer

DLS IR mandates CPDLC capability for aircraft operating above FL 285. If such capability does not exist (aircraft is not equipped or crew is not trained) and if the aircraft is not exempted, flight plan should indicate flight profiles below FL 285 within the airspace where the DLS IR is applicable.

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https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115358

Is the CPDLC equipage requirement mandatory only for EU operators?

Answer

The DLS IR is an airspace requirement and is applicable for all IFR GAT flights operating above FL285. This includes all flights operated by EU and Non EU operators within the airspace defined in Annex I, regardless the State of registration.

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https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115359

Is there specific technology I need to use to demonstrate compliance with the DLS IR?

Answer

The performance required by the DLS IR is that defined in the Eurocae standard ED-120 - ‘Safety and Performance Requirements Standard for Air Traffic Data Link Services in Continental Airspace’). The technology currently and consistently deployed in Europe to meet this required performance is ATN VDL Mode 2 (as defined in the ICAO Annex 10 — Aeronautical Telecommunications — Volume III, Part I (Digital Data Communication Systems).

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https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115360

If I use CPDLC via FANS-1/A am I compliant with the DLS IR?

Answer

CPDLC via FANS-1/A cannot ensure the performance requirements mandated through the DLS IR, the only system currently capable to achieve this is ATNVDL Mode 2. Additionally, the FANS 1/A versus ATN B1 CPDLC message set may be different (i.e. certain messages not used) within a certain operational context.

Note 1: FANS-1/A are CPDLC capable installation designed in accordance with the relevant interoperability specifications in Eurocae standard ED-100/ED-100A.

Note 2: Aircraft with a first CofA prior to 1 January 2018 and equipped with FANS 1/A data link prior to this date are exempted from compliance.

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https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115361

Do I need to indicate my ATN VDL Mode 2 CPDLC capability in the flight plan?

Answer

If the aircraft has ATN VDL Mode 2 CPDLC capability and the crew are appropriately trained, the operator should enter the J1 designator in item 10 of the flight plan in accordance with the provisions of the ICAO PANS-ATM (ICAO Doc 4444 ‘Procedures for Air Navigation Services (PANS-ATM)’, Sixteen Edition 2016), as transposed by the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1033/2006 on ‘requirements on procedures for flight plans in the pre-flight phase for the single European sky’.

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How do I demonstrate my aircraft’s compliance with the DLS IR?

Answer

One means to demonstrate compliance with the DLS IR is to have evidence that the aircraft design is compliant with CS-ACNS (Certification Specifications and acceptance means of compliance - Airborne Communications, Navigation and Surveillance).
Such evidence of compliance can normally be found in the Airplane Flight Manual (AFM)

CS-ACNS is a means, however not the only means to comply with the DLS IR.

If there is no relevant statement in the AFM, operators should check with the type certificate holders (TCHs) or the supplemental type certificate holders (STCHs) as to the CPDLC

installation compliance details.

- Link to CS-ACNS

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Link:
https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115363

Is there a requirement for operators to ensure that their aircraft's CPDLC installation is multi-frequency capable?

Answer

Airborne multi-frequency capability is a requirement as stated in Article 6 'Obligations of operators for data link communications' of the DLS IR through reference to ICAO Annex 10 Volume III, where the need for "auto-tune" capability (also known as multi-frequency) is addressed.

EASA SIB 2019-13 'Controller Pilot Data Link Communications over Very High Frequency Data Link Mode 2 – Airborne Multi-Frequency Capability', provides more information and recommendations on this topic.

- Link to EASA SIB 2018-13

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Link:
https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115364

How can I determine if my aircraft is CPDLC multi-frequency capable?

Answer

Operators can check:

- the AFM, which should contain a statement such as "The aircraft ATC Data Link system does support multi-frequency operation as defined in ARINC Specification 631-5." or
- directly with the type certificate holder (TCH) or with the supplemental type certificate holder (STCH) if the system was installed by an STCH. or
- check the aircraft documentation for the indication that the system supports CPDLC multi-frequency operation (e.g. ARINC Specification 631-5 or higher)

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Does my aircraft need to be listed on the aircraft CPDLC ‘white list’ or ‘log-on list’ to be compliant with the DLS IR?

Answer

An aircraft is technically compliant with the DLS IR if it has been demonstrated that the aircraft datalink installation is compliant with CS-ACNS, no further demonstration of compliance is required. Being included in the so-called ‘white list’ or ‘log-on list’ is not a regulatory requirement.

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Is my aircraft supposed to be able to record CPDLC communications?

Answer

On board recording of CPDLC messages is required, however, this depends upon age and operations undertaken.

For **European operators,** compliance with the communication recording capability in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 is required for newly manufactured aircraft as follows:

- on or after 08 April 2014 for CAT operations
- on or after 01 January 2016 for other-than-CAT operations

For **Third Country Operators (TCO)**, compliance with the requirements of ICAO Annex 6 is required (i.e. newly manufactured aircraft on or after 01 January 2016 and new CPDLC installations).

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Are there any exemptions available for operators through the regulatory framework of the DLS IR?

Answer

The DLS IR provides operators with a number of conditions under which permanent exemptions (where applicable) from the requirement to equip with data link capability are possible.
These conditions can be summarised as follows:

1. operator/aircraft falls under one of the criteria listed in Article 3(3) of the DLS IR, or
2. the aircraft type/model is listed EC Implementing Decision 2019/2012

Even if the DLS IR equipage requirements are not applicable for some operators, they may still choose to comply with the DLS IR. In this case, compliance with all applicable parts of the DLS IR is expected.

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https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115368

Do I need to communicate to EASA or any other organisation that my aircraft is meeting the criteria for exemptions and is hence exempted?

Answer

There is no formal reporting requirement for an operator if their aircraft meet one of the exemption conditions as defined in Article 3(3) of the DLS IR, or the aircraft type/model is listed EC Implementing Decision 2019/2012. However, it is recommended that operators advise their National Aviation Authority where the aircraft is registered.

Operators should reflect the CPDLC exemption status in the flight plan as detailed in EASA SIB 2020-03.

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https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115369

How should I reflect the CPDLC exempted status in the flight plan?

Answer

The operator should declare its CPDLC exempt status when filling the flight plan by including letter “Z” in item 10 and the indicator “DAT/CPDLCX” in item 18 of each flight plan.

For further details on how to reflect the CPDLC exempt status in the flight plan please check the EASA SIB 2020-03.

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Link:
https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115370

If I have CPDLC equipment, which is temporarily inoperative, can I benefit from a DLS IR temporary exemptions?

Answer

In accordance with Article 3(3) flights with equipment temporarily inoperative may continue to operate within the applicable airspace. However, these operations are to be within the limits and conditions of the MEL (Minimum Equipment List), and the flight plan should also reflect that the aircraft is exempt during this temporary inoperative period.

If the operator decides to declare its CPDLC exempt status, flight plan should reflect that the aircraft is exempted by including letter “Z” in item 10 and the indicator “DAT/CPDLCX” in item 18 of each flight plan.

For further details on how to reflect the CPDLC exempt status in the flight plan please check the EASA SIB 2020-03.

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https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115371

Where can I find more information on MEL for CPDLC?

Answer

Conditions for operation and rectification interval should be in accordance with the operator's MEL that is approved by the operators National Aviation Authority. As such, we recommend you initially contact your National Aviation Authority. Note that the MEL is based on the MMEL specific for the aircraft/model and cannot be less restrictive.

Specific information regarding the MMEL for aircraft type/model can be obtained from the aircraft Type Certificate Holder (TCH) or Supplemental Type Certificate Holder (STCH)

For any further information on MMEL please send your request to mmel [at] easa.europa.eu.

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Link:
https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115372

I have a delivery flight from an aircraft manufacturer and I will fly through the airspace where CPDLC equipage is mandated. Is my flight restricted below FL285 within the airspace affected or can I benefit from exemption?

Answer

Delivery flights are exempted in accordance with Article 3(3) of the DLS IR. You may operate above FL 285, however, your flight plan should reflect that the aircraft is exempted by including letter "Z" in item 10 and the indicator "DAT/CPDLCX" in item 18 of each flight plan.

For further details on how to reflect the CPDLC exempt status in the flight plan please check the EASA SIB 2020-03.

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https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115373

If my aircraft is compliant with the DLS IR and the flight crew trained, however my aircraft also qualifies for CPDLC exemptions, what shall I insert in the flight plan?

Answer

If the operator voluntarily decides to comply with DLS IR (aircraft capable + crew trained), J1 designator should be used in item 10 of the flight plan in accordance with ICAO PANS-ATM. In this case, even of the aircraft is eligible for CPDLC exemption, the flight plan should not reflect CPDLC exempt status.

If the operator decides to declare its CPDLC exempt status, flight plan should reflect that the aircraft is exempted by including letter “Z” in item 10 and the indicator “DAT/CPDLCX” in item 18 of each flight plan.

In this case, J1 designator should not be used in the flight plan even if the aircraft is technically capable. Nonetheless, if properly equipped and compliant with the DLS IR, operators are encouraged to use the CPDLC capability on board.

For further details on how to reflect the CPDLC exempt status in the flight plan please check the EASA SIB 2020-03.

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Link:
https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115374

Who should I ask if I have further questions on CPDLC equipage exemption?

Answer

For any further information on CPDLC exemption please send your request to atm [at] easa.europa.eu.

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https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/115375