



## OPERATIONAL SAFETY INSTRUCTION

### Aircraft Diversions

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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

A diversion is the arrival of an aircraft at an aerodrome for which it was not originally planned. This instruction outlines the actions to be taken in the event of an aircraft diversion into Bristol Airport. A significant number of diversions to Bristol Airport may affect safety and operational performance at Bristol, therefore it is important that the aerodrome authority, Air Traffic Control and ground handling agencies work closely together to minimise disruption.

An aircraft may divert from its intended destination for a number of reasons including but not limited to an on-board medical emergency, aircraft technical problem, weather at the intended destination, runway closure or congestion/curfew.

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 2.1. Airport Duty Manager

The Airport Duty Manager (ADM) is responsible for monitoring and coordinating diversion situations at the airfield. The ADM is responsible for setting the diversion status of the airport and informing ATC using the NATS Airfield Status Map. This number is dynamic and will depend on the season, stand availability and handling agent capabilities (notwithstanding the pre-agreed diversion commitments in Plan 39, see section 5).

If the ADM receives notification of a fog warning/poor visibility for Bristol, weather information for other airports within the likely 'diversion catchment area' will be sought. This information is vital to enable efficiency in stand planning, labour resources and onward coaching plans.

At the earliest opportunity the ADM will contact the nominated handling agent, ATC, Airside Operations and any other relevant company to discuss and propose a management plan. After discussion with other parties, the ADM may decide not to accept a diversion due to lack of parking stands, staff resource or other constraints.

## 2.2. Airport Control Centre

The ACC operators are responsible for the allocation of parking stands for diverting aircraft; in the event that the diversion will require a 'contingency' parking stand, this shall be decided in liaison with Airside Operations.

## 2.3. Air Traffic Control

ATC are responsible for informing the ADM of any aircraft that contacts them directly to request a diversion to Bristol.

ATC will be responsible for initiating airport emergency procedures for any diverting aircraft that declares an emergency.

ATC will advise the ADM on any capacity issues due to noise quota, runway occupancy or weather-related restrictions.

## 2.4. Airside Operations

Airside Operations will be advised by the ADM of any diversion that may require parking on a contingency stand, a stand not normally designated for that aircraft size or type, or for any other potential safety issues that may require a safety assessment and coordination.

Airside Operations should consider the need to provide a follow-me service to any flight crews that may be unfamiliar with the layout of Bristol Airport, particularly at night and in low visibility conditions. Airside Operations may also be required to marshal aircraft on to stand where the handling agent does not have staff immediately available, to maintain the flow of aircraft on the ground.

In exceptional circumstances where a stand is not available, Airside Operations may authorise aircraft to park on a taxiway and be serviced in that location. This should not be authorised if it will impact on other aircraft operations or first wave departures.

## 3. RESCUE AND FIRE-FIGHTING CATEGORY

If any diverting aircraft are likely to be a higher rescue and fire-fighting category than the category currently published/available, these may be accepted under remission – refer to UK AIP EGGD AD 2.6 Rescue and Fire-Fighting Services.

## 4. AIRCRAFT AND PASSENGER HANDLING

Handling agent availability – consideration should be given to the capability of the nominated handling agent to handle diversion aircraft, both staffing levels on the ramp and undercroft, passenger handling and onward coaching arrangements.

General Aviation and Business Aviation flights – these flights should be parked on the southside of the airfield; the ADM shall advise ATC and consult with Airside Operations and the relevant handling agent as required.

UK Border Force – Immigration cover is available H24, however the ADM shall liaise with the UKBF Senior Officer on duty to advise them of the additional passengers and agree actions to control passenger flow as required.

## 5. PLAN 39

Occasionally a large UK aerodrome will experience a ‘mass diversion event’, whereby the aerodrome or runway is closed due to an exceptional event such as severe weather, drone activity or protestor activity. In such events a significant number of aircraft may have to divert elsewhere, which has in the past required NATS to contact other aerodromes to establish their availability for accepting diversions. This is a time-consuming activity and, in the meantime, airborne aircraft may experience fuel emergencies. In order to expedite and stabilise a mass diversion scenario and minimise the chance of multiple fuel emergencies in the immediate aftermath of an event, a protocol has been developed by NATS and is referred to as **Plan 39**.

**Plan 39** provides NATS with immediate, pre-authorised, additional landing slot capacity for diversions for specified airlines and aircraft types at specified airports thus enabling air traffic controllers to respond quickly to requests from pilots. It is expected that this process will clear 15-20 aircraft within the first 45 minutes.

### 5.1. Pre-authorised Slots

Bristol Airport has committed to a total of **two** pre-authorised diversion slots in total for **Code C** aircraft for **Ryanair, easyJet, Jet2 and TUI aircraft**.

### 5.2. Triggering Plan 39

The Plan 39 protocol is triggered by NATS Swanwick and notified to industry through each airport’s air traffic control unit, who have the responsibility to cascade to their Airport Authorities. At Bristol, NATS will inform the ADM. Only when the words ‘PLAN 39 Activated’ are stated will the pre-authorised slots become active.

### 5.3. Conditions

- Diversions under Plan 39 are to be subject to normal ATC coordination but not approval by the Airport Authority.
- Diversions for airlines not stated above must be coordinated with the Airport Authority.
- Emergency aircraft are not included in the numbers of pre-authorised slots and the normal diversion process should be followed.
- When an aircraft requests a diversion and Bristol has already accepted its quota (two), ATC may advise the crew where slots are still available (as per the latest airfield status advised

by the ADM). Diversions in excess of the number agreed in Plan 39 will be subject to telephone coordination and the normal diversion process will be followed.

- Flights diverting to Bristol under Plan 39 may experience ground handling delays dependent on the handling agent resource allocated to other flights.

#### 5.4. Nil Diversion NOTAM

An airport NOTAM – “Airport Not Available for Diversion” DOES NOT impact Plan 39; Bristol Airport is still able to accept its pre-authorised quota. The only time Bristol Airport would not accept its quota is when ATC have specifically advised Terminal Control that the Plan 39 quota cannot be accepted due to exceptional circumstances i.e. long-term work in progress or similar constraint.

#### 5.5. Temporary or Permanent changes to Plan 39

Any temporary or permanent changes to the number of Plan 39 slots, times available, or size of aircraft, will be communicated by the Airside Operations Co-ordinator or Airside Operations Manager to:

- NATS Bristol
- NATS Swanwick – [plan39@nats.co.uk](mailto:plan39@nats.co.uk)
- Ground handling agents
- Terminal Operations
- Airside Operations

Any person who wishes to request a change should contact the Airside Operations Manager in the first instance to agree what will be communicated.

### 6. GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Any enquiries regarding aircraft diversions should be addressed to the Airport Duty Manager [adm@bristolairport.com](mailto:adm@bristolairport.com).

Any enquiries regarding this instruction should be addressed to the Airside Operations Manager [chris.davis@bristolairport.com](mailto:chris.davis@bristolairport.com)