

# Flight Planning Rule Changes for Canada: Part 1 – Recent Changes

*This business aviation blog post is part of a series on flight planning rule changes for Canadian airspace.*

Installation of new Air Traffic Service (ATS) surveillance systems – combined with advancements in flight data processing systems and aircraft data link capabilities – has created opportunities for ATS improvements within the Gander oceanic control area. Effective May 29, 2014, the Gander Area Control Centre established the Gander Oceanic Transition Area (GOTA) to take advantage of benefits associated with new technology. Changes, as announced by Aeronautical Information [Circular \(AIC\) 31/13](#), will take place throughout 2014 and continue through 2015 and beyond.

The following is an overview of what you need to know:

## 1. NAV Canada changes

With the formation of GOTA, additional fixes will be added within the Gander Flight Information Region (FIR) domestic/oceanic boundary over the next two years. The first new fixes became operational May 29, 2014. These fixes are aligned to eventually allow half degree track spacing associated with the Reduced Lateral Separation Minimum (RLatSM). Trials within the North Atlantic Track (NAT) region begin in 2015.

## 2. North Atlantic routings

NAV Canada has introduced new North Atlantic Routes (NARs) that operators must use to access NATs. These NARs have been issued as Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) and are also published in Jeppesen's North Atlantic directory. The purpose of these changes is to allow higher aircraft density within NAT airspace. It's important that operators check for new NAR requirements, prior to filing flight plans, as they'll receive rejection messages if new NARs are not included in flight plans.

## 3. Objective of changes

In order to reduce lateral separation over the North Atlantic and routes leading to NATs, more fixes and more FIR boundaries are being added to airspace in eastern Canada. These changes are also being implemented for control purposes by helping sector the airspace into smaller areas, allowing for better traffic control. The end result will permit more aircraft in North Atlantic airspace than was previously possible. For more information see [NAV Canada's](#)



## 4. Reduced track spacing

Currently, track spacing for minimum navigation performance specification-approved aircraft is one degree of latitude. Proposed changes reduce lateral separation to half a degree at Flight Levels (FLs) and on tracks associated with NAT Region Data Link Mandate airspace. This track spacing initiative, referred to as RLatSM, will be implemented in phases over approximately two years – beginning with FL 350-390 coverage. Phase two will expand RLatSM to encompass all NATs FL 290-600.

## 5. Area of impact

NAV Canada's changes cover the GOTA and Gander Domestic Terminal Area (GDTA). GOTA is an area adjacent to the North Atlantic oceanic airspace and a transition zone between the North Atlantic and inland fixes into the U.S. GDTA is like an additional FIR boundary, with a Controller Pilot Data Link Communication (CPDLC) area that is separate from Gander oceanic control airspace.

## 6. Operator trial period

On or soon after February 5, 2015, Gander, Shanwick, and Reykjavik area control centers will begin trials of 25-nautical mile RLatSM within portions of Gander, Shanwick, and Reykjavik oceanic control areas. Operators who wish to may sign up to participate in this trial.

## 7. Operator actions

If you use the older fixes for the Gander oceanic control area, your flight plan request will be denied. However, Gander Oceanic will let you know where the errors are in your flight plan request and indicate what needs to be changed. Therefore, it's important to always check chart dates and information available on NAV Canada's website for fix changes. It's also important to ensure that your Flight Management System (FMS) has been updated. If your FMS has not been recently updated, this may cause issues such as the inability to uplink flight plans; departure delays; and the inability to view new waypoints and/or potential downstream issues at destination if airport slots or prior permissions required are needed or airspace curfews/closures occur.

## 8. Fixes that will be deleted /added by Gander Oceanic

Below you will find the deleted and added fixes (current as of the publication date of this article):

Deleted fixes:

URTAK, BANCS, RONPO, COLOR, NOVEP, VIXUN, LOGSU, KOBV, CYMON, DENDU, DOTTY, CRONO, HECKK, REDBY, CARPE, STEAM, OYSTR, VALIE, SCROD, and LOACH.

Added fixes:

BIPNI, DANIV, IPVOT, LOKBI, NIFTY, ROTVO, TOXIT, VESMI, BOKTO, ENNSO, IRLOK, KODIK, MAPIR, PELTU, SAXAN, VINSA, BUDAR, IBERG, MUSAK, OMSAT, RELIC, and TABOX.

## 9. CPDLC approved routings

Gander Oceanic advises via NOTAM, on a daily basis, CPDLC routings that are active on the NATs or on entry routings through Canada to the NATs. Note that CPDLC tracks are not in place at all times. When they're active, CPDLC tracks can extend up to FL 390. As few general aviation aircraft are equipped/approved for CPDLC, a

preferred option, currently, is to fly above these tracks. Flying above CPDLC tracks is not problematic as long as you're able to climb to the appropriate flight level in time for the crossing. Low-level routings across the North Atlantic, such as Blue Spruce routes, are not currently affected by these changes.

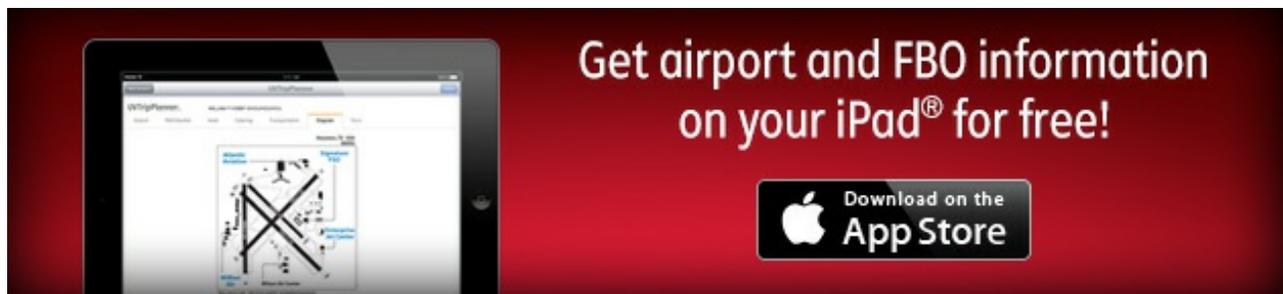
## Conclusion

It's important to be mindful of newly implemented NARs when filing North Atlantic flight plans via Canadian airspace. The NARs help with traffic flow, and, as of May 29, 2014, flight plan requests without these fixes are being rejected by Canadian air traffic control. It's also important to ensure that your FMS has been recently updated.

## Questions?

If you have any questions about this article or would like flight planning assistance for your next trip, contact me at [markmiller@univ-wea.com](mailto:markmiller@univ-wea.com).

***Stay tuned for Part 2, which covers future equipment requirements when transiting Canadian airspace.***



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