

GUIDANCE ON SLOT ALLOCATION AND SLOT MONITORING: HEATHROW, GATWICK, STANSTED, LONDON CITY, LUTON MANCHESTER, WARSAW AND DUBLIN

WHAT IS AN AIRPORT SLOT?

An airport slot is a permission to operate at a coordinated airport on a **specific date and at a specific time** as allocated by a coordinator.

Aircraft operators must not **intentionally** operate (or plan to operate) at a time which is different from the allocated slot time – the time on the passenger ticket and/or the initial flight plan should match the allocated slot time.

Operators must adhere to the airport slot time. Obtaining pushback clearance from ATC does not override the airport slot time allocated.

Airport slot times are the **on/off block times**, not the landing or take off times.

SLOT CLEARANCES

All aircraft operators must have a slot allocated by the coordinator **before** operating at a coordinated airport, except for emergency landings. Special provisions for Urgent or Time Critical Operations are set out in Annex 1.

Slot requests should be made in good time before the planned operation. On-the-day and out-of-hours slot requests should be kept to a minimum. Departure slots should be secured at least 30 minutes **prior** to operation (if booked using the Online Coordination website – SITA or email requests should be made at least 24h in advance). Arrival slots must be secured **prior** to the aircraft departing from its point of origin.

SLOT TOLERANCES

ACL expects all operators to plan to operate **exactly** to their assigned slot times. Intentional off slot operations will be considered misuse and be subject to sanction under the Misuse of Slots Enforcement Code.

RE-CLEARING SLOTS

Operational Delays

Flight Type	Re-Clear Slots After	
Commercial Passenger	Delays into the next day after 0600 local time ^(1,2)	DO NOT re-clear following on-the-day delays
Commercial Freight / Mail	Delays into the next day after 0600 local time ⁽²⁾	DO NOT re-clear following on-the-day delays
Positioning – regularly scheduled	Delays into the next day after 0600 local time ⁽²⁾	DO NOT re-clear following on-the-day delays
Positioning – ad hoc	Delays more than 2 hours	MUST re-clear following delays >2h
GA/Business Aviation	Delays more than 2 hours	MUST re-clear following delays >2h
Other non-commercial	Delays more than 2 hours	MUST re-clear following delays >2h

- **Passenger services** (scheduled or charter) **must not** re-clear slots following on-the-day operational delays. ACL's slot data updates the airports' flight information displays and operational systems. Rescheduling a delayed passenger service will cause confusion as the new slot time will not match the ticket times.
- **Commercial services** (passenger or freight) and positioning flights operated as a regularly scheduled series of slots (not ad hocs) **may operate without re-clearing slots on the same day** following operational delays.

Delays into the next day (after 0600 local time) must re-clear airport slots with the coordinator.⁽¹⁾

- **Ad hoc non-commercial services** (positioning, training, GA/Business Aviation, etc) should re-clear airport slots with the coordinator following operational delays of **more than 2 hours**.

This does **not** mean that such flights may **intentionally** operate at a time different from the allocated slot time within this 2 hour window. Examples of intentional off-slot operations within this two hour window include:

- Operational issues known before the time of operation
- Incorrect block times
- Late arrival of crew or business aviation passengers unless due to exceptional circumstances, e.g., an unplanned closure of the motorway or suspension of rail services..

(1) Heathrow Local Rule 2 permits the operation of delayed scheduled services with commercial loads within 24 hours of the originally scheduled time

Early Operations

- Operators wishing to advance the **planned** time of a flight must re-clear airport slots. Early arrivals for operational reasons, eg, due to unexpected winds, do not need to re-clear slots.

UK SLOT MISUSE SANCTIONS AND IRISH SANCTIONS SCHEME

The repeated and intentional misuse of slots at coordinated airports in the UK (Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton, London City and Manchester) may be subject to financial sanctions in accordance with the Misuse of Slots Enforcement Code. See <http://www.acl-uk.org/SlotSanctions.aspx> for details.

At Dublin the repeated and intentional misuse of slots may be subject to financial sanctions in accordance with the Irish Slot Sanctions Guidelines. See <http://www.acl-international.com/default.aspx?id=155> for details.

ANNEX 1: URGENT OR TIME CRITICAL OPERATIONS

1. By virtue of Article 2(g) of the Slot Regulation, the types of operation described in this paragraph may operate at a coordinated airport without a slot allocated by the Coordinator. With the exception of emergency landings, operators of such flights must apply to the Coordinator in advance and provide all necessary information to determine the flight's status. The Coordinator will allocate an available slot to these flights, where possible, to ensure that airport operations are not prejudiced.
 - a) State Flights
Heads of State flights, flights carrying Government Ministers, or flights carrying visiting dignitaries from abroad on an official visit.
 - b) Emergency Landings
Diversions or Quick Returns after takeoff and police emergencies. Emergency landings must be notified to the Coordinator as soon as possible after the event for monitoring purposes.
 - c) Humanitarian Flights
Medical Emergencies, Donor Flights, Search and Rescue, Air Ambulance flights where the condition of the patient is urgent or acute and alternative airfields or modes of transport are not feasible.
2. In addition to the types of operation listed in paragraph 1, there are some types of operation that by their nature are urgent or time critical. All such flights require a slot allocated in advance by the Coordinator. To accommodate these types of operation the coordinator **may** 'overbook' the normal coordination parameters having taken into account the congestion likely to occur and the overall capacity situation. These types of operation are:
 - a) Technical Flights
Radar and ILS calibration flights, Air Tests limited to daylight hours for technical reasons and where no feasible slots are available.
 - b) Recovery Flights
Departures to continue a planned commercial service with passengers aboard on the same day following a Diversion or Quick Return.

Positioning flights to replace an unserviceable aircraft or other unforeseeable schedule disruption (eg, severe weather) and resume a planned commercial passenger service, limited to the following circumstances:
 - Inbound positioning to recover a planned departure service
 - Outbound positioning to recover a based-carrier's own service
 - The return of a based-carrier's recovery aircraft to resume planned operations
Overbooking will **not** be considered in circumstances such as:
 - Outbound positioning to recover another air carrier's service, ie, a sub-charter
 - Positioning to replace an aircraft undergoing planned maintenance, including instances of a maintenance overrun
 - Any planned positioning of an aircraft
3. Where flights are accommodated in accordance with paragraphs 1 or 2 of these procedures, the Coordinator may block a nearby vacant slot, if available, to ensure that airport operations are not prejudiced.