

LOCAL RULE 2

HEATHROW PROCEDURES FOR AD HOC OPERATIONS

EFFECTIVE FROM: 23 MARCH 2026

ISSUED BY: HEATHROW AIRPORT CAPACITY PLANNING

1. POLICY

This document outlines the procedures for managing ad hoc operations at Heathrow Airport. The primary objective is to optimise the use of available capacity for the benefit of all traffic types whilst ensuring compliance with prevailing regulation and minimising negative operational impact to the airport. Airport Coordination Ltd (ACL) holds responsibility for authorising all ad hoc operations at Heathrow Airport. Outside standard office hours, these duties are delegated to the Aircraft Operations Unit (AOU) who operate as a department of Heathrow Airport (refer to Appendix A for contact details).

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To optimise the use of available capacity for the benefit of all traffic types
- 2.2 To prevent ad hoc activities from contributing to congestion or negatively impacting Heathrow Airport's operational efficiency
- 2.3 To ensure that ad hoc operations are managed impartially and transparently
- 2.4 To provide a clear and fair ad hoc slot allocation process.

3. DEFINITIONS

In this document, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

Ad Hoc Operation	<i>any operation that is not part of a series of slots.</i>
Air Taxi	<i>non-scheduled air transport operation for hire or reward and in the case of a passenger air transport operation where seating capacity of aircraft used exceeds 10.</i>
AODM	<i>Aircraft Operations Duty Manager – responsible for managing aircraft flow and ensuring the operational delivery of the aircraft stand plan.</i>
AOU	<i>Aircraft Operations Unit - comprises of Aircraft Operations Duty Managers and Operations Controllers (formerly Stand Allocation Unit).</i>
CFMU	<i>Central Flow Management Unit – responsible for managing air traffic flow and coordinating flight schedules in Europe.</i>
GA	<i>General Aviation - any air traffic not falling into one of following categories: scheduled air service; Air Taxi service; Official Flight; positioning flight; training flight.</i>
Official Flights	<i>any air traffic engaged on the King's Flight or on flights operated primarily for purposes of the transport of Government Ministers or visiting Heads of State or dignitaries from abroad.</i>
Operations Controllers	<i>A team within Heathrow Airport's Aircraft Operations Unit who – overseen by AODMs - provide stand allocation services outside ACL's office hours,</i>

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Pool Slot	runway capacity available for ad hoc operations as declared in <i>seasonal Runway Scheduling Limits, declared by Heathrow Airport in mid-October for a Summer season and mid-May for a Winter season.</i>
Series (of slots)	<i>at least five slots distributed regularly in a scheduling season at same time on same day of the week.</i>
SI	<i>Supplementary Information – additional information required in certain circumstances when request an ad hoc pool slot,</i>
Slot	<i>scheduled time of arrival or departure available or allocated to an aircraft movement on a specific date at a fully coordinated airport.</i>
SSIM	<i>Schedule Standards Information Manual, IATA document that defines schedule coordination request message formats (SSIM Chapter 6).</i>

4. REQUESTS FOR AD HOC OPERATIONS

- 4.1 All requests for ad hoc operations must be submitted in writing. Subscribers to ACL's Online Coordination System (OCS) are encouraged to make requests via this website and submissions to ACL should be made in SSIM-format via e-mail (refer to Appendix A for contact details).
- 4.2 Urgent requests outside ACL office hours should be made by e-mail to Heathrow Airport's AOU with the required information in Appendix B: Request Data Requirements. All out-of-hours requests must be followed up with a telephone call to the Heathrow AOU.
- 4.3 When flight data has been input via OCS but there are no slots available, press "ask us" to generate a record in the database that can be actioned by the Heathrow Airport's AOU or ACL.
- 4.4 Telephone requests will be accepted provided they are followed up in writing for audit purposes.
- 4.5 Requests should be made as early as possible and out-of-hours requests should be kept to a minimum. Speculative requests without a firm intention to operate is considered an abuse of the system as per Section 10 of this Local Rule.
- 4.6 Requests may be made by the aircraft operator or their authorised handling agent. ACL may limit those authorised to make requests directly. Air Taxi and GA operators that do not use Heathrow Airport regularly should make requests via their handling agent.
- 4.7 Except for Heathrow-based airlines, all requests should be in turnaround format. ACL will not normally allocate an arrival slot without a corresponding departure slot due to the shortage of apron space at Heathrow Airport.
- 4.8 Requests should also indicate any timing flexibility for acceptable offers. On SSIM-format messages, this should be included as Supplementary Information (SI) text.
- 4.9 For details of request data requirements (see Appendix B: Request Data Requirements).

5. RESPONSES TO REQUESTS

- 5.1 ACL endeavours to respond to most requests within 24 hours and all within three business days. Urgent requests are prioritised.
- 5.2 Responses will be in writing by e-mail. Offers made by telephone will be followed up in writing. Out of hours e-mail may be used for slot requests to the AOU.

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- 5.3 Operators must Accept or Decline offers made as soon as possible, and at the latest within 3 business days or the offer will be withdrawn. Operators may accept an offer and remain on the Waitlist for an improved time (i.e. Pend).

6. THE ALLOCATION OF AD HOC SLOT AVAILABILITY

- 6.1 The runway capacity available for ad hoc operations consists of Pool Slots, as declared seasonally.
- 6.2 Pool Slots are allocated according to Appendix B: Traffic Type Priorities. Where requests have equal priority, the Request Date is used as a secondary criterion.
- 6.3 The allocation of Pool Slots for ad hoc operations commences after the Slot Handback Deadline for the corresponding season. Operators should not request ad hoc slots prior to these dates and Early applications will be assigned the same request date for Waitlist purposes.
- 6.4 Slot availability is published on OCS. All operators are encouraged to consult this prior to making a request and target available times.
- 6.5 Slots for ad hoc operations may be suspended by Heathrow Airport. The following conditions may result in the suspension of the allocation of ad hoc slots:
- a) adverse operating conditions (e.g. severe weather)
 - b) extraordinary events (e.g. major sporting event or state occasion)
 - c) temporary loss of airport infrastructure (e.g. a runway closure) that is likely to lead to significant and prolonged disruption or delay.

Heathrow Airport will declare to ACL if such conditions exist. When the allocation of ad hoc slots is suspended, any allocated ad hoc slots may be withdrawn upon reasonable notice to the operator. In such circumstances, the exemption rules described in Section 7 and Appendix D: Exempt Flight Types of this Local Rule will still apply.

7. EXEMPT FLIGHT TYPES

- 7.1 A limited set of flight types are Exempt Flights and will be permitted to operate when slots are not available. Details of Exempt Flight types are provided in Appendix C.
- 7.2 Except for Emergency Operations and Operational Delays, operators must notify ACL in advance of any operation and provide the information necessary to verify their exempt status. Emergency Operations must be notified to ACL as soon as possible for monitoring purposes.
- 7.3 ACL will allocate an available slot for Exempt Flights where possible. Operators should accept an available slot time when they have the flexibility to do so.
- 7.4 When an Exempt Flight is planned at a time when no slots are available, ACL may block an adjacent available slot to minimise any adverse impact on airport operations.

8. WAITLIST MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 A Waitlist is maintained of all outstanding ad hoc requests, including those seeking improvements to an allocated slot. The Waitlist information includes the assigned Traffic Type Priority (Appendix C) and Request Date.
- 8.2 The Waitlist is regularly reviewed, and new/revised offers are made as Pool Slots become available.
- 8.3 All operators must inform ACL of any changes to Waitlist requirements and of requests that should be removed from the Waitlist either due to acceptance of an offer or cancellation of the request.

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8.4 Handling agents may not re-assign slots between customer operators. The slots offered must be deleted and a new request made.

9. RETURN OF AD HOC POOL SLOTS

9.1 All operators must return any unwanted Pool Slots as soon as possible for re-allocation to those on the Waitlist.

9.2 ACL regularly monitors slot use to ensure that slots are returned when not required. Any airlines who regularly fail to do so may be sanctioned under the Misuse of Slots Enforcement Code and/or Heathrow Conditions of Use (Appendix E)

10. MONITORING OF POOL SLOTS

10.1 ACL regularly monitors the use of Pool Slots. All operators are expected to operate as closely as possible to the allocated times to minimise congestion and delay. Exempt Flights are also monitored.

10.2 The allocated time is measured against on/off block times, not runway times.

10.3 The following are examples of potential abuses of pool slot use:

- a) Operating without prior approval, except for Emergency Operations or Operational Delay
- b) Regularly or intentionally failing to adhere to an allocated slot for reasons that are not beyond an operator's control
- c) Failure to return unwanted slots where it is practical to do so
- d) The provision of false or misleading information in a slot request for the purposes of gaining higher priority or Exempt Flight status
- e) Regularly making speculative requests for ad hoc operations without a firm intention to operate
- f) Attempts to re-assign slots between operators and bypass the Waitlist.

Note that obtaining CFMU slot time or pushback clearance from ATC does not override the airport slot time allocated.

10.4 Instances of potential abuse will be investigated by ACL under the Misuse of Slots Enforcement Code, and the operator may be liable for sanctions under this enforcement code and/or the Heathrow Conditions of use.

10.5 If an operator is guilty of regular and/or intentional abuse, ACL may also give the operator lower priority when considering future requests for ad hoc operations.

11. HELICOPTERS

11.1 All helicopter movements require prior approval in accordance with these procedures.

11.2 During daylight hours (which vary by time of year), helicopters do not require a runway slot for a maximum of 2 helicopter movements per 60-minute period (with a minimum of 10-minutes separation between each movement). At other times, a runway Pool Slot is required.

11.3 This exemption from runway slots is available for ad hoc operations only. Regular helicopter services require the allocation of Pool Slots.

12. GENERAL AVIATION PARKING CONSTRAINTS

12.1 Due to the shortage of apron space at Heathrow Airport, the airport declares available GA parking in the capacity declaration seasonally. Exempt Flight Types are counted in determining whether the parking limit is reached.

12.2 It is not permitted to overstay the allocated departure date/time without prior approval.

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12.3 Any requests above the declared capacity should be referred to Heathrow Airport's AODMs.

13. NOISE EXEMPT AIRCRAFT

13.1 Ad hoc operations by noise exempt aircraft types during the Night Quota Period (2330 – 0600 local time) require prior approval in accordance with these procedures. If the flight is unable to achieve its allocated time, the operator must notify Heathrow Airport's AOU immediately to allow the information to be distributed.

Date of Local Rule	March 2026
Version Number	10
Previous Version Date	March 2015

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A CONTACT DETAILS

Airport Coordination Limited
Rourke House
Watermans Business Park
The Causeway
Staines-Upon-Thames
TW18 3BA

Office Hours: Monday-Friday (excl. Bank Holidays)
0900 – 1700 local time

Telephone: +44 (0) 20 8564 0613

Email: LONACXH@acl-uk.org

Website: www.online-coordination.com (for Slot Availability)

Heathrow Aircraft Operations Unit (AOU)

Contact for requests outside ACL office hours to operate on the same or next day of the out-of-hours period. For weekends this includes flights on a Monday.

Email: OCS@heathrow.com

Heathrow Aircraft Operations Duty Managers (AODMs)

Telephone: +44 (0) 20 8745 0077

Duty Mobile: +44 (0) 7525 825585

Email: aodm@heathrow.com

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APPENDIX B: REQUEST DATA REQUIREMENTS - INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR AD HOC SLOT REQUESTS

Requests for ad hoc operations must include the following information:

Basic Information:

- Arrival/Departure Flight Number
- Date of operation (arrival if an overnight stay)
- Number of seats (use 0 if no passengers on board)
- Aircraft type
- Origin/Last station
- Arrival/Departure time requested
- Turnaround days (if the departure is 1 or more days after arrival)
- Next station/Destination
- Arrival/Departure Service Type.

Supplementary Information:

- Aircraft Registration – mandatory for non-airline requests
- Timing flexibility.

Special Supplementary Information:

For Air Ambulance (if seeking an exemption)

- Condition of the patient – NACA scale I to VII
- Patient connecting with a Heathrow service – Flight Number
- Reason use of an alternative airfield is not possible.

Note: Out of Hours use the Air Ambulance Exemption Request form attached.

Recovery Flight

- Service requiring recovery
- Reason normal aircraft is unserviceable.

VIP/Official Flight

- Dignitary aboard.

Example Ad Hoc Request – SSIM format message:

```
SCR
/ATTN
W02
20FEB
LHR
NMVI600 MVI601 01MAR 014GS4 LTN2000 07001NCL DN
SI //REG N66SG//
SI DEP BEFORE 0730 IF POSS
GI BRGDS
```

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APPENDIX C: TRAFFIC TYPE PRIORITIES

The priorities used for the allocation of Pool Slots to ad hoc operations are:

Priority	Description	Service Types
1	VIP flights other than Official Flights ¹	I
2	Commercial passenger flights	J, C, Q, G, E
3	Commercial all-cargo flights	F, H, M, A
4	Positioning flights to operate a planned commercial service or to undergo essential maintenance	P
5	Ambulance flights ²	U
6	Air Taxi or General/Business Aviation flights	N, D, W
7	Other non-commercial flights e.g. air tests ³ , positioning flights, training flights, technical stops	P, T, K, X

Notes:

- 1 Includes support aircraft for Official Flights; eligibility to be determined in consultation with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.
- 2 Urgent ambulance flights may be exempt where no feasible slots are available, and use of alternative airfields is not possible. Use D for positioning flights without the medical crew.
- 3 Air tests that must occur in daylight hours for technical reasons may be exempt where no feasible slots are available. Due to the unpredictability of the time required to conduct the test, operators will not be penalised for off-slot arrivals, subject to monitoring.

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APPENDIX D: EXEMPT FLIGHT TYPES

1. Emergency Operations

Includes Diversions/Quick Returns, Police Emergencies, and Search and Rescue Operations.

- All Emergency Operations must be notified to ACL as soon as possible for monitoring purposes.
- Departures that continue the planned service following a Diversion or Quick Return on the same day do not require the prior approval of ACL; departures delayed to the following day or positioning flights (i.e. after passengers/freight are off-loaded) require prior approval.

2. Medical Emergencies

Includes Donor Flights, Flights where safety of life is involved, and Humanitarian Flights.

Please note that Ambulance flights are not automatically exempt, however, may be exempt where the need to move patient is urgent, and:

- The use of an alternative airfield is not possible; and/or
- The patient is connecting to/from a commercial Heathrow service.

A positioning leg associated with an exempt ambulance flight may also be exempt where the medical crew is aboard and are required for other emergency services.

The operator/handling agent is responsible for obtaining information on the patient's condition, use of alternative airfields, and any connecting commercial flights.

The patient's condition should be indicated using the NACA international scoring system to give an overall description of the patient's condition. This is the same system used by CFMU for ATFM slot exemption. The NACA categories are:

- NACA I - minor health disturbance
- NACA II - out-patient check-up needed
- NACA III - hospital treatment needed
- NACA IV - possible health threatening
- NACA V - acute critical condition
- NACA VI - resuscitation
- NACA VII - death.

NACA categories V or VI qualify for slot exemption. NACA category IV qualifies where the patient is connecting to/from a commercial Heathrow service.

The NACA category should be included as SI text in the slot request. For organ donor transports, the word DONOR should be included as SI text.

3. Official Flights

The King's Flight and flights carrying Government Ministers, visiting Heads of State. or dignitaries from abroad.

4. Technical Flights

Radar and ILS calibration flights, and Air Tests limited to daylight hours for technical reasons and no feasible slots are available.

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5. Recovery Flights

Positioning to replace an unserviceable aircraft or other unforeseeable schedule disruption and resume a planned commercial service.

This exemption applies only to:

- An inbound positioning flight to recover a planned Heathrow departure service
- An outbound positioning flight of an away-based airline's aircraft following unplanned essential maintenance at Heathrow, where aircraft is urgently required to resume planned commercial operations
- An outbound positioning flight to recover a Heathrow-based airline's own service (e.g., a base operator requires an aircraft to position to LGW to recover a flight at LGW)
- The return of a Heathrow-based recovery aircraft to resume planned commercial operations.

It does not apply to circumstances such as:

- Outbound positioning to recover another airline's service (e.g. sub-charter).
- Positioning to replace an aircraft undergoing planned maintenance, including instances of a maintenance overrun.
- Any planned positioning of an aircraft to operate a commercial service.

6. Operational Delays

The unplanned delay of a scheduled service (with commercial load) within 24 hours of the original scheduled time. The operator is responsible for ensuring that terminal and ground handling facilities are available at the revised time.

7. Passenger Repatriation Flights

Passenger repatriation flights to recover passengers will be accepted if directed and confirmed by the Government.

8. Heathrow – Base Operators Essential Maintenance and Essential Positioning Flights

When Section 6.5 applies, base operators may be permitted to operate essential maintenance and essential positioning flights within declared seasonal scheduling limits and subject to prior authorisation from ACL.

9. Heathrow Schedule Passenger Flight Delayed More Than 24 Hours

When Section 6.5 applies, Heathrow Airport's scheduled airlines' flights with a delay more than 24 hours may be permitted to operate a passenger service to recover a Heathrow scheduled flight. This must be within declared seasonal runway schedule limits and is subject to prior authorisation from ACL.

10. Compassionate Flights

When Section 6.5 applies, compassionate flights (Comp A only) may be allowed to operate subject to prior authorisation from ACL.

The compassionate categories are:

- Comp A - Critically ill, life-threatening condition
- Comp B - Death or non-critical illness
- Comp C - Discounted Ticket on Commercial Airlines.

11. Operational Retimes for Scheduled Flights In periods of reduced capacity

When Section 6.6 is applied and ad-hoc capacity is withdrawn by the airport due to disruption caused by weather or airport facilities, retimes will not be allowed unless they are deemed to be a benefit to the airport operational environment. Any retimes must fit within the declared capacity.

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APPENDIX E:

[Heathrow-Airport-Limited-Conditions-of-Use-2026.pdf](#)

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APPENDIX F: SERVICE TYPE CODES

Code	Description	Application	Type of Operation
J	Normal Service	Scheduled	Passenger
S	Shuttle Mode	Scheduled	Passenger
F	Cargo	Scheduled	Cargo/Mail
M	Mail only	Scheduled	Cargo/Mail
Q	Passenger/Cargo Combi	Scheduled	Passenger/Cargo
B	Shuttle Mode	Additional Flights	Passenger
G	Normal Service	Additional Flights	Passenger
R ¹	Passenger/Cargo Combi	Additional Flights	Passenger/Cargo
A	Cargo/Mail	Additional Flights	Cargo/Mail
H	Cargo and/or Mail	Charter	Cargo/Mail
C	Passenger Only	Charter	Passenger
L	Passenger and Cargo and/or Mail	Charter	Passenger/Cargo/Mail
O	Charter requiring special handling (e.g., Migrants/immigrant Flights)	Charter	Special Handling
N	Business Aviation	BA	Not specific
D	GA, non-commercial, Positioning Air Taxi	GA	Not specific
U	Air Ambulance / Humanitarian	Others	Passenger Non-specific
E	Government	Others	Not specific
W	Military	Others	Not specific
I	State/Diplomatic/VIP	Others	Not specific
X ²	Technical Stop (for Chpt. 6 Only)	Others	Not specific
V	Surface Vehicle	Others	Cargo/Mail
K	Crew training	Others	Not specific
T	Technical Test	Others	Not specific
P	Empty Positioning	Others	Not specific

¹Service Type Code 'R' is used internally by Heathrow for Emergency / Diversion and is not counted an ATM when an Emergency / Diversion occurs.

²Service Type code 'X' is used internally by Heathrow for the departure of an aircraft that has previously landed as an Emergency / Diversion. This may be counted as an ATM.

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APPENDIX G: OUT OF HOURS SLOT REQUEST FORMS

URGENT – HEATHROW OUT OF HOURS AIR AMBULANCE EXEMPTION REQUEST

FROM:

TO/FROM: AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS UNIT

TEL NO:

E-mail: OCS@Heathrow.com
TEL: +44 (0) 20 8745 6033

TEL NO:

COPY TO: AIRPORT COORDINATION LTD
E-mail: LONACXH@acl-uk.org
TEL: +44 (0) 20 8564 0613

ALL TIMES UTC

	Arrival	Departure	DETAILS	AOU USE ONLY
Flight Number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Patient's condition: NACA scale I to VII or DONOR	Actioned by AOU Name: Date:
A/C Registration	<input type="text"/>			
Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
Time Requested	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		

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Flexibility Range	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	-	-	Connecting to/from LHR service:	Replied to Originator: Yes/No
-	-				
Time Offered	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			Flight No:	Copied to ACL: Yes/No
Aircraft Type	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Reason alternative airfield not possible:	Entered in USIS: Yes/No	
Origin / Dest	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			Other Information:	
Service Type	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				
Use N for positioning leg unless Medical Crew aboard					
Patient Aboard	ARR / DEP				
Previous Slot	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				

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URGENT – HEATHROW OUT OF HOURS SLOT REQUEST

FROM:

TO/FROM: AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS UNIT

TEL NO:

E-mail: OCS@Heathrow.com
TEL: +44 (0) 20 8745 6033

COPY TO: AIRPORT COORDINATION LTD

E-mail: LONACXH@acl-uk.org
TEL: +44 (0) 20 8564 0613

ALL TIMES UTC

	ARRIVAL	DEPARTURE	REMARKS	AOU USE ONLY
Flight Number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		Actioned by AOU Name: Date: Replied to Originator: Yes/No
A/C Registration	<input type="text"/>			
Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
Time Requested	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
Flexibility Range	<input type="text" value="-"/>	<input type="text" value="-"/>		

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Time Offered	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Copied to ACL:	Yes/No
Aircraft Type	<input type="text"/>		Entered in USIS:	Yes/No
No of Seats	<input type="text"/>	Enter 0 if no pax		
Origin / Dest	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
Service Type	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
Previous Slot	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		