

SUBJECT : IMPLEMENTATION OF SPACING "AT 8.33 KHZ" BELOW FL 195

This AIC cancels and replaces AIC A 09/13

The purpose of this circular is to provide information on the implementation of the 8.33 kHz spacing between VHF voice communication channels in the airspace of the ICAO EUR region managed by France. It cancels and replaces AIC A 09/13 of 5 September 2013.

For the purposes of this Circular, the following terminology is used:

- * Radio 8.33: "VHF communication equipment, providing a permanent bilateral link with the designated ground-based organizations, capable of using 8.33 kHz and 25 kHz channel spacing".
- * 8.33-kHz (resp. 25-kHz) frequency: "frequency used in a channel spacing of 8.33 kHz (resp. 25 kHz)".

1 INTRODUCTION

Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1079/2012 of the European Commission of 16 November 2012¹ lays down the necessary requirements for the coordinated introduction of air-ground voice communications based on 8.33 kHz RF channel spacing throughout the airspace of the ICAO EUR region managed by Member States (from ground to unlimited).

This regulation provides that civil aircraft equipped with a radio and operating in this airspace, have equipment capable of using the 8.33 kHz channel spacing at the latest on December 31, 2017. This requirement is already in effect in the upper airspace (FL 245 and beyond) in France since 1999.

In order to take into account the constraints related to compliance of the general aviation fleet, the DGAC has prepared and notified to the European Commission, a plan for the gradual conversion of radio communication frequencies used in lower airspace, derogating from certain deadlines of the regulation as the latter allows.

2 THE REGULATION

2.1 Purpose and scope

The regulation applies to all general air traffic (GAT) flights in the airspace of the ICAO EUR region managed by Member States, in particular under FL 195, and to all in-band ground and in-band VHF [117.975 MHz - 137 MHz] radio equipment.

It lays down requirements for the conversion to 8.33 kHz of almost all the frequencies in this band and the carrying of 8.33 kHz compatible radio equipment.

The conversion requirements do not apply to the following 25 kHz frequencies: urgency (121.5 MHz), SAR (123.1 MHz), VDL, ACARS, CLIMAX², as well as the frequencies that shall remain within 25 kHz channel spacing for security reasons.

2.2 Implementation

2.2.1 Conversion of frequencies from 25 kHz to 8.33 kHz

From January 4, 2018: All IFR flight plans for aircraft not equipped with 8.33 radios will be rejected. For information, in order to indicate that the aircraft is equipped with a 8.33 kHz capable radio, the letter Y must be inserted in box 18 of the flight plan.

From September 1, 2018: Access to Class A, C and D airspace is restricted to aircraft equipped with an 8.33 radio.

From January 1, 2021: Every aircraft equipped with a radio must be equipped with a 8.33 radio.

¹ Link to Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1079/2012 of the European Commission of 16 November 2012 establishing specifications for the spacing of voice communication channels for the Single European Sky: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32012R1079&from=FR>

² SAR: Search and Rescue
VDL: VHF Digital Link.

ACARS: Aircraft Communication Addressing and Reporting System.

CLIMAX: operation with offset carrier within 25-kHz channel spacing.

Frequency changes will be made known to airspace users through aeronautical information.

The aforementioned provisions apply subject to special provisions made in respect of certain State aircraft.

Special case: radios intended for use exclusively on 25 kHz frequencies are not required to be compatible with 8.33 kHz, for example, portable emergency radios intended to be used only on the 121.5 MHz emergency frequency.

WARNING:

The pilot of an aircraft must not use non-compatible 8.33 kHz radio equipment to communicate on a 8.33 kHz frequency, otherwise interference may occur which could interfere with communications between pilots and other distant ATS units, and thus affect flight safety.

Reminder:

When selecting the communication channels, the pilot respects the following principle: a channel given by the figures ABC.DEF (ex 128.025) is a "25 channel" with a width of 25 kHz if EF = 00, 25, 50 or 75. In all other cases, it is an "8.33 channel" with a width of 8.33 kHz.

Example: 126,675 is a 25 channel; 119,380 is a 8.33 channel.