

Wind information

ICAO Annex 3 specifies that wind information is observed, recorded and reported with the (mean) values for direction and speed. Detailed provisions exist on accuracy, timeliness and other parameters for various circumstances. Example: Information to be provided to arriving and departing aircraft shall be “The mean direction and the mean speed of the surface wind ..., as well as significant variations of the wind direction and speed”.

Mean values are derived by averaging the wind information over a period of two minutes for local routine and special reports, i.e. those that are transmitted to arriving and departing aircraft.

Pilots have to observe various operational limitations, such as cross-wind and tail-wind. These have to be calculated from the wind information provided.

Air traffic services personnel, mainly controllers, increasingly have at their working positions wind displays that also show along-track and cross-track wind components referenced to the active runway(s).

The IFALPA ATS Committee investigated the benefits and disadvantages of a potential change in the reporting requirements, suggested by some ATS officials, to report the components to departing and arriving aircraft. Although some arguments support such a change, the majority of factors to be considered by pilots requires that the current ICAO provisions should not be changed.

In the emerging System-Wide Information Management (SWIM) environment there is an opportunity to develop automated systems to transmit wind information to departing and arriving aircraft. This would relieve the load on voice communication channels. Suitable on-board systems would however have to be designed and implemented.

Your feedback on this IFALPA Briefing Leaflet is requested to ATS@members.ifalpa.org.