

Operations at Stockholm-Arlanda Airport (ESSA/ARN)

IFALPA has been made aware of recurring drone issues affecting operations at Stockholm-Arlanda (ESSA/ARN) to the extent that the airport had to be closed on several occasions.

On the 7th of August, Stockholm-Arlanda was closed for about an hour due to drones being flown within the airport's Control Zone. Two Maydays were declared and several aircraft were diverted. On the 15th of August, the airport was closed again with a Mayday call and diversions.

The lack of international Standards and European Regulation on how to deal with drones being operated near airports means that each States have their own procedure to handle this issue. In Sweden, the Directive issued by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is to stop all flight operations for 30 minutes, or until the drone is confirmed to be back on the ground.

The above situation at Arlanda is of great concern to IFALPA. The consequences of a drone impact on aircraft windscreens and helicopter rotors can be catastrophic, even at relatively modest speeds with small drones, as was demonstrated by an independent study conducted in the United Kingdom and published last month (see notes below).

Although no NOTAM has been issued by the Swedish CAA, under these circumstances IFALPA strongly recommends that pilots exert extreme caution when flying to Arlanda and consider taking extra fuel to allow for possible last minute closures and subsequent diversion.

Notes:

The UK study on drone collision testing can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drones-and-manned-aircraft-collisions-test-results>

The IFALPA Position Paper on Unmanned Aircraft Systems can be found at:

<http://www.ifalpa.org/publications/ifalpa-statements/aircraft-design-operation.html>