

## US Domestic En Route Data Communications

*Our Member Association, ALPA-I has issued an Operations Bulletin concerning the deployment of Controller-Pilot Data Link Communications (CPDLC) in US en route Domestic Airspace.*

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is in the process of deploying Controller-Pilot Data Link Communications (CPDLC) in US en route domestic airspace.

CPDLC allows air traffic controllers to send data link clearances and instructions to pilots in domestic airspace, including climbs, descents, reroutes, and handoffs between ATC sectors in the en route Center (ARTCC) environment. In addition to flight efficiency benefits from streamlined communications, CPDLC is expected to enhance safety as reroutes are provided in a form that allows for loading directly into the FMS, reducing the risk of typing errors or fix name confusion.

**For pilots with international or oceanic experience with CPDLC, the service is largely the same in domestic airspace. However, there are some areas especially concerning LOGON that are unique to the US. ALPA has created a webpage <https://www.alpa.org/datacomm> which will be kept up to date with the latest information for pilots as the system is deployed.**

Participating airlines have been training flight crews on properly equipped aircraft in anticipation of the nationwide deployment over the next year and a half. Currently participating ALPA carriers include Alaska (both B737 and A320), Delta, FedEx, Hawaiian, JetBlue, United, and Kalitta. Other carriers that will be participating include Southwest, UPS, American, Air Canada, and several other cargo and international carriers.

While CPDLC is in limited part-time use now, throughout the remainder of 2018 the initial FAA ARTCCs with this capability (Indianapolis, Memphis, and Kansas City Centers) will expand service to all eligible aircraft and fleets on a 24/7 basis. The remaining ARTCCs in the domestic airspace will be activated in sequence over the course of 2019.

Once airspace adjacent to Canada is activated, handoffs of CPDLC service to and from NAV CANADA will be supported. The FAA Data Comm program contractor (Harris) is providing a status of CPDLC deployment at:

<http://dcis.harris.com/en-route-cpdlc-site-activation-map>.

**Pilots are advised:**

- **If you do not understand or are not absolutely clear on the interpretation or application of a CPDLC clearance, do not accept it (select REJECT/UNABLE), and then verify by voice.**
- **Follow company training and procedures for use of CPDLC.**
- **Review the dispatch release and MEL to ensure that the aircraft is qualified to perform CPDLC.**
- **Respond to all CPDLC messages received, including those which only require an acknowledgment (ROGER/ACCEPT).**
- **All CPDLC messages will be normal operational ATC clearances, and CPDLC messages do not require voice readbacks unless requested by ATC (acknowledgement is through the ACCEPT/WILCO or REJECT/UNABLE response via CPDLC).**
- **Note that clearances given by voice by ATC still require voice readbacks.**

The ALPA Air Safety Organization and Engineering & Air Safety staff will continue to participate in the FAA's Data Comm Implementation Team, and other industry venues, and will provide any updates as they become available. If you have any questions, please contact ALPA EAS at [eas@alpa.org](mailto:eas@alpa.org) or 1.800.424.2470.