
Subject: Strategic Lateral Offset Procedure (SLOP) Policy Update

Introduction

Strategic Lateral Offset Procedure (SLOP) is an ICAO policy for all oceanic and remote airspace. This includes all of the Atlantic, Pacific, and remote regions of North America. The purpose is to provide an additional safety margin in the current day environment of highly accurate navigational equipment in non-surveillance RVSM airspace. SLOP not only reduces head-on collision risk, but also addresses vertical height errors for same or opposite direction traffic. Pilots are required to adopt this procedure as appropriate. The ICAO language is as follows:

- To achieve an equal distribution of flying the centerline or 1 NM or 2 NM right of centerline, it is recommended that pilots randomly select flying centerline or an offset.
- To obtain lateral spacing for wake avoidance from nearby aircraft (i.e., those immediately above and/or below), pilots should use whatever means available (e.g., TCAS, voice or visual acquisition) to determine the best flight path to fly.
- Pilots are not required to inform ATC that a strategic lateral offset is being applied.

Operating Procedures

The following is Delta's updated policy concerning SLOP with respect to the theater of operation. Crews should use their best judgment to determine the most appropriate position to fly and have the final authority and responsibility for the safe operations of the aircraft.

- **Oceanic and Remote Regions:** Pilots flying an airway, random route, or published track in the Atlantic, Pacific, or remote regions should fly centerline or the lateral offsets of either 1 NM or 2 NM right of centerline.
- **WATRS Plus (West Atlantic Route System):** Pilots flying an airway or random route in WATRS Plus airspace should fly centerline or the lateral offsets of either 1 NM or 2 NM right of centerline with the following exceptions:
 - Offsets are not authorized on M-201 between BAHAA and PAEPR, and L-453 between PAEPR and AZEZU.
 - Offsets are not authorized on "Y" routes.

- **GOMEX (Gulf of Mexico):** Beyond radar coverage, pilots should fly centerline or the lateral offsets of either 1 NM or 2 NM right of centerline with the following exception:
 - Offsets are not authorized on any "Q" routes.
 - **Africa, Russia/Russian Far East (RFE) and South America (south of 8° North):** Pilots should offset 1 NM right of centerline.
- Note:** Aircraft transiting radar coverage in oceanic airspace (i.e. Bermuda and Hawaii) do not need to remove any lateral offset.
- Note:** SLOP is not in the definitions or terminology of some Air Traffic Service Units (ATSUs). If asked, the recommended response terminology is, for example: "Delta XXX is flying a 1 NM parallel offset".

Summary

This updated SLOP policy clarifies the option of using centerline in some theaters of operation and adds Russia/RFE as requiring a 1 NM offset. Route offset flying enhances safety by minimizing collision and wake turbulence risk. The crew should use their best judgment to determine the most appropriate position to fly. The Airway Manual will be updated to reflect these changes.

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