

Northern Winter 2020 Slot Waiver

In recognition of the severe and unprecedented crisis the aviation industry finds itself in as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need for continuation of slot use alleviation through the upcoming northern winter 2020/21 season ("NW20") at all slot-coordinated airports and schedule facilitated airports.

The airline community understands the needs of all stakeholders affected by a slot waiver and the desire to ensure a swift recovery is supported and not hindered. Airlines believe a slot waiver, as set forth below, will bring certainty and flexibility to a season that is going to be a question of survival for all stakeholders. We now ask that the relevant authorities, regulators and governments consider this request positively and urgently.

The purpose of the waiver

The industry needs certainty of the slot planning environment to build a robust schedule in the current circumstances and flexibility to adapt to sudden changes. Industry partners need information on the planned schedule as soon as possible to inform their own planning and to achieve optimal use of capacity, but with the flexibility that allows consumer demand to be served in a sustainable manner. The airline industry therefore agrees:

- Suspension of the Use-it or Lose-it rule should apply for all Level 3 slot coordinated airports globally, ensuring no airline or airport is treated differently.
- Level 2 facilitators should prioritize flights cancelled, or otherwise not operated as originally intended, for purposes of establishing a carrier's operational baseline in the next corresponding season.
- The waiver should not apply to slots newly allocated from the pool for the NW20 season.
- The waiver should not apply to slots that are held by an airline exiting the airport permanently, beginning in NW20, with no intention to return and no utilization of those slots in the NW20 period in keeping with WASG 8.14. This does not prevent slot transfers and operator utilization where local regulation and legislation allows.
- The waiver should require airlines to hand back slots not intended for utilization as soon as possible, but at the latest two weeks prior to planned operation in order to receive alleviation. Airlines should not hold on to slots they will not utilize but return them to the coordinator at the earliest opportunity for reallocation in keeping with WASG 8.5.2.
- Consideration for alleviation should be given to slots that are returned less than two weeks before operation in the event that government advice prevents a planned flight from operating (for example, closure of borders or government advice to prevent all but essential travel).
- **The waiver should apply for the full NW20 season: 25 October 2020 to 27 March 2021 and be confirmed by the latest at the end of July.**

Reallocating slots and ensuring optimal use of airport capacity

Reallocation of slots is encouraged to ensure that everyone benefits from the slot waiver. Coordinators should therefore actively manage the waitlist, addressing retiming requests and new ad hoc operations with the slot pool created from the capacity available.

It is in everyone's interest that the reallocation of slots is responsive to demand and the changing needs of the industry through the course of the season. As much advance notice as possible of changes to planned schedules should be provided to industry stakeholders. A timely return of slots to the pool is critical to this process.

A waiver for the NW20 season is needed now

In order for the benefits of the slot waiver to be realized, it needs to be confirmed urgently. Airlines are already in the middle of the planning period for the NW20 season; without certainty of the slot waiver being in place the planning cannot be optimized. The [WASG](#) requires all slot series to be handed back before the Series Return Deadline of [15 August](#). This is an important deadline in the NW20 season aviation planning process and can only be of use if airlines have certainty of a slot waiver. To ensure effective use of these critical deadlines so coordinators can manage capacity and airlines and airports have better predictability of their plans, we need the regulators and governments concerned to act quickly. In accordance with the industry's need for certainty, the implementation of a global NW20 slot use waiver should be confirmed before the end of July at the latest.