

# Supplementary Instruction (SI)

## CAP 493 MATS Part 1

Safety and Airspace Regulation Group

Intelligence, Strategy and Policy



Number 2014/05 (Issue 1)

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### Minimum Fuel and Fuel Shortage

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this Supplementary Instruction is to notify a change to CAP 493 Manual of Air Traffic Services Part 1 (MATS Part 1) procedures relating to:
- (a) pilots declaring “minimum fuel”; and
  - (b) pilots indicating that they are becoming short of fuel.

#### 2 Background

- 2.1 In May 2012 the Manual of Air Traffic Services Part 1 was amended by SI 2012/06 entitled ‘Low Fuel, Holding Procedures, and Associated Radiotelephony Phraseology’ to include how controllers should respond to a pilot’s declaration of “minimum fuel”, which ICAO had planned to introduce into PANS-ATM in October 2012.
- 2.2 The rationale behind this early implementation was that the practice of pilots declaring “minimum fuel” had already been implemented by a number of nations and the Authority believed it prudent to amend MATS Part 1 accordingly ahead of the anticipated increase in traffic associated with the London Olympics in July 2012.
- 2.3 SI 2012/06 required controllers to respond to a pilot’s declaration of “minimum fuel” or any indication of fuel shortage by confirming the estimated delay the pilot could expect then ask the pilot as to whether or not he wished to declare an emergency. Flight priority category ‘A’ (CAP 493 Manual of Air Traffic Services, Part 1, Section 1, Chapter 4) would only be provided to pilots that declared an emergency. However, in recent discussion at the NATS Safety Partnership Agreement (SPA), operational feedback from aircraft operators regarding their use of “minimum fuel” highlighted that the MATS Part 1 procedure now requires amending.
- 2.4 Aircraft operators have highlighted that pilots will *only* declare an emergency following their “minimum fuel” declaration if ATC advise that the estimated delay has increased from that previously communicated and at this additional delay causes the aircraft to land below their legally required ‘final reserve fuel’. Final reserve fuel is defined within EASA Ops for Commercial Air Transport (CAT) flights as fuel for 30 minutes of flight for turbine powered aircraft or 45 minutes for piston powered aircraft. Fuel policies from other countries external to the European Union may be different.
- 2.5 Therefore, following a pilot’s declaration of “minimum fuel” declaration controllers are now required to confirm the estimate delay to the pilot, and immediately provide an



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update if the estimated delay increases. Pilots will then determine whether or not to declare an emergency.

- 2.6 It is also known that the use of “minimum fuel” RTF phraseology has not been adopted by every aircraft operator or adopted by every pilot. Therefore, for this reason controllers are required to respond to a pilot who indicates that he is becoming short of fuel but has not declared “minimum fuel” by confirming the estimated delay or track mileage from touchdown and asking the pilot if he wishes to declare an emergency to obtain a priority landing.

### 3 Revised MATS Part 1 Procedures

- 3.1 With effect from 1 December 2014, CAP 493 is amended as shown at [Appendix A](#). This will be incorporated into CAP 493 Edition 6 at Amendment No. 1 which is scheduled for publication in December 2014.

### 4 Queries

- 4.1 Any queries or further guidance required on the content of this SI should be addressed to:

ATS Enquiries  
Intelligence, Strategy and Policy  
CAA Safety and Airspace Regulation Group  
2W Aviation House  
Gatwick Airport South  
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RH6 0YR

E-mail: [ats.enquiries@caa.co.uk](mailto:ats.enquiries@caa.co.uk)

- 4.2 Any queries relating to the availability of this SI should be addressed to:

ATS Documents  
Intelligence, Strategy and Policy  
CAA Safety and Airspace Regulation Group  
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### 5 Cancellation

- 5.1 This SI shall remain in force until 31 January 2015.