



SAFETYGRAM

September 2015

After over 20 years of flying, I'm reminded of the truism that change is the only constant. Like giant concrete arrows marking airmail routes, LORAN C, VLF OMEGA, and ADFs, now Flight Watch on 122.0 is going the way of the dodo bird. (Okay, so you occasionally stumble across a functioning ADF and some of the concrete arrows still exist, but it's harder and harder to find them these days.) Replaced by newer technologies and competing for scarce funding (GPS and ADS-B for example), these flight aids fade into historical references.

Just in case you missed the news like I did until recently, the FAA announced Flight Watch on 122.0 will no longer be monitored under new contracts starting 1 Oct 15. That means you'll have to hunt for a frequency on a chart if you need flight service while airborne. From the FAA's FAQ page: "Enroute Flight Advisory Service (EFAS) - Historically, EFAS, known as "Flight Watch", was only available over special frequencies from a limited number of trained specialists who had access to the needed technology. The service provided on the frequency for EFAS (122.0 MHz), along with the high altitude discrete frequencies that provide in-flight weather information to pilots, will be consolidated into routine inflight frequencies to eliminate unnecessary duplication of service. With this new approach, a pilot can obtain all services that Flight Service has to offer with one call. The service will now be available on the same frequencies used to open/close flight plans or to receive updates on Notice to Airmen (NOTAMS) or Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs). It will also eliminate the expense of maintaining a separate frequency without any degradation of safety or efficiency. During a 6 month transition period, Lockheed Martin Flight Service (LMFS) will monitor current EFAS frequencies and will provide an RCO frequency to use in order to receive enroute weather and advisories."

The FAA has also announced there have been changes with DUATS II (the FAA funded electronic pilot weather briefing system). DUATS II service providers are now Lockheed Martin and CSC; DTS will no longer provide DUATS service. So if you want to get an approved electronic weather brief, make sure you're using one of those two providers (1-800 WX BRIEF – 1-800-992-7433 still works by phone). This could also impact your use of third party providers (like ForeFlight, WingX, or FlyQ EFB) that draw from the FAA sources. Both DUATS service providers require setting up a free account, FYI. The first link below gives a very positive user review of one of the services, to include real time notification/depiction of TFRs, last minute runway closures, etc.

What's all this mean to you and I? It's nothing cosmically different to our flight ops. But like everything else, we just need to know where to go for all the info we need. So if you haven't thought about your weather sources on the ground and in the air for a while, take time to peruse the links below. With the end of summer, I'm sure we'll all need to check the weather a little more closely before we fly. I've included quite a few links below that are meant to generate discussion at your safety meeting...please take a look and discuss practical applications.

FAA Weather Briefing Changes:

http://www.aopa.org/News-and-Video/All-News/2015/August/Pilot/pe_technology

End of Flight Watch 122.0:

http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ato/service_units/systemops/fs/change_s/

http://www.aopa.org/AOPA-Live.aspx?watch=F3D5A678-6C54-4E85-ADCC-54ABF62DD8D4&WT.mc_id=150612epilot&WT.mc_sect=sap

Lockheed Martin Automated Flight Service

<https://www.lmfsweb.afss.com/Website/login> or 1800wxbrief.com

CSC DUATS:

<https://www.duats.com/>

FAA Awards New Duats Contract:

<http://www.ainonline.com/aviation-news/business-aviation/2015-05-14/faa-awards-new-duats-contract-lockheed-martin-csc>

10 Ways an iPad in the cockpit can get you in trouble:

<http://generalaviationnews.com/2015/08/23/10-ways-an-ipad-in-the-cockpit-can-get-you-into-trouble/>

<http://www.aopa.org/News-and-Video/All-News/2013/March/25/Never-Again-Online-Winged-porpoise>

FLY SAFELY!



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