



IBAC Bulletin B 01- 1

Subject: Use of lateral offsets and the effect on airspace safety.

The following ICAO State Letter and accompanying Guidance Material was prepared and distributed for the guidance of States and ICAO Regional Planning Groups.

Although this material was not prepared for the attention of flight crews nor has any request been made for distribution to flight crews, IBAC considers that it would be appropriate and in the interests of safety for business aviation flight crews to take note of this material.

Text of ICAO State Letter as follows:

Ref.: AN 13/11.6-00/96

3 November 2000

Sir/Madam,

1 . I have the honour to invite your attention to the attached guidelines on the use of lateral offsets and the effect on airspace safety, which were prepared by the Review of the General Concept of Separation Panel (RGCSP) and approved by the Air Navigation Commission for circulation to States and international organizations. The material relates to aircraft with highly accurate navigation systems, such as the global navigation satellite system (GNSS), when pilots apply lateral offsets as a safety measure to reduce a perceived increase in the risk of collision in the event of a loss of vertical separation.

2 . At present, the application of lateral offsets is unregulated and, in some instances, pilots have applied lateral offsets at their discretion without first obtaining approval from the appropriate air traffic control (ATC) unit. This practice does not comply with Annex 2 — *Rules of the Air*, Chapter 3, paragraph 3.6.2.1.1, which states: “Unless otherwise authorized or directed by the appropriate air traffic control unit, controlled flights shall, in so far as practicable: a) when on an established ATS route, operate along the defined centre line of that route; or b) when on any other route, operate directly between the navigation facilities and/or points defining that route.”

3 . The RGCSP recognized that the magnitude and direction of offset, in some cases, could have an adverse effect on safety. In this regard, the RGCSP carried out a technical analysis of ATS route configurations to quantify the effect on safety of lateral offsets. In the time available, only

routes in oceanic or remote airspace in a procedural ATC environment were examined, using existing collision risk models. The analyses showed that there was, potentially, a significant increase in the risk of collision on some route configurations.

4 . In view of the safety implications of pilots applying lateral offsets in an unregulated and random manner, the guidelines are intended to assist States and planning and implementation regional groups (PIRGs) to identify routes and airspace where application of lateral offsets could be authorized. It is considered that the material would assist States to regulate the use of lateral offsets and thereby enhance existing safety levels.

5 . States are urged to keep ICAO informed of any safety-related issues associated with the application of lateral offsets in accordance with these guidelines.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

R.C. Costa Pereira

Secretary General