

Provision of 'Smoke' SIGMETs

Background

The phenomenon that UK airspace experienced on 16th October 2017, during which smoke from forest fires on the Iberian Peninsula were drawn up into UK airspace, impacted the operation of several aircraft.

Consequently, and following discussions with the Civil Aviation Authority, the Met Office have commenced the provision of 'Smoke SIGMETs' to provide timely information on this potential hazard to aviators in the event of a widespread smoke event.

Principles for issuing Smoke SIGMETs

The following principles for the provision of smoke SIGMETs have been agreed with the CAA:

- Smoke SIGMETs will be produced upon confirmed reports from at least 2 aircraft within a similar area
- These aircraft reports should contain evidence to support the presence of natural combustible material in the atmosphere
- Smoke SIGMETs will have a validity period not exceeding 4 hours, in common with SIGMETs issued for most other phenomena
- Smoke SIGMETs may be defined as a bounded area or entire FIR as appropriate
- The flight levels stated in smoke SIGMET will normally reflect the heights reported by aircraft +/- 2000ft. For example, if smoke is reported at FL100, the SIGMET would reflect a height range of FL080/120.
- Reference to movement/expected movement may be reported in smoke SIGMETs
- Changes of the intensity of smoke will not be forecast

Example

Example of a Smoke SIGMET, based on the above principles:

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Example  
WSUK33 EGRR 100750  
EGPX SIGMET 04 VALID 100800/101000 EGRR-  
EGPX SCOTTISH FIR FU OBS WI N6130 E00250 – N6055 E00350 – N6050 E00250 –  
N6130 E00250 FL080/120 MOV E 20KT NC=
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