mandates that all helicopter air ambulance operators must begin reporting the number of flights and hours flown, along with other specified information, during which helicopters operated by the certificate holder were providing helicopter air ambulance services. See Public Law 112–95, Sec. 306, 49 U.S.C. 44731. The Act further mandates that not later than 2 years after the date of enactment, and annually thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, a report containing a summary of the data collected.

The helicopter air ambulance operational data provided to the FAA will be used by the agency as background information useful in the development of risk mitigation strategies to reduce the helicopter air ambulance accident rate, and to meet the mandates set by Congress. The information requested is limited to the minimum necessary to fulfill these new reporting requirements mandated by the Act and as developed by FAA. The amount of data required to be submitted is proportional to the size of the operation.

Respondents: 62 Helicopter Air Ambulance Operators.

Frequency: Annually.

Estimated Average Burden per Response: Varies per size of operation.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: 738 Hours for all operators.

Issued in Washington, DC, on October 8, 2020.

Sandra L. Ray,
Aviation Safety Inspector, FAA, Policy Integration Branch, AFS–270.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Notice of Submission Deadline for Schedule Information for Chicago O’Hare International Airport, John F. Kennedy International Airport, Los Angeles International Airport, Newark Liberty International Airport, and San Francisco International Airport for the Summer 2021 Scheduling Season

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice of submission deadline.

SUMMARY: Under this notice, the FAA announces the submission deadline of October 15, 2020, for Summer 2021 flight schedules at Chicago O’Hare International Airport (ORD), John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR), and San Francisco International Airport (SFO).

DATES: Schedules should be submitted by October 15, 2020.

ADDRESSES: Schedules may be submitted to the Slot Administration Office by email to: 7-AWA-slotadmin@faa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Al Meilus, Manager, Slot Administration, AJR–G, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20591; telephone (202) 267–2822; email Al.Meilus@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This document provides routine notice to carriers serving capacity-constrained airports in the United States, including Chicago O’Hare International Airport (ORD), John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR), and San Francisco International Airport (SFO). In particular, this notice announces the deadline for carriers to submit schedules for the Northern Summer 2021 scheduling season. The FAA generally strives to maintain consistency in setting this deadline with the schedule submission deadline established in the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Calendar of Coordination Activities. However, in an effort to provide carriers with additional time to respond to this notice, the FAA is extending the submission deadline by one week from October 8, 2020 to October 15, 2020. The FAA intends to carry out its schedule review consistent with all other deadlines established in the IATA Calendar of Coordination Activities.

General Information for All Airports

The FAA has designated EWR, LAX, ORD, and SFO as IATA Level 2 airports subject to a schedule review process premised upon voluntary cooperation. The FAA has designated JFK as an IATA Level 3 airport consistent with the Worldwide Slot Guidelines (WSG).

1 These designations remain effective until the FAA announces a change in the Federal Register.

1 The FAA generally applies the WSG to the extent there is no conflict with U.S. law or regulation. The FAA is reviewing recent substantive amendments to the WSG adopted in edition 10. The FAA recognizes the WSG has been replaced by the Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines (WASG), edition 9.

2 Operating Limitations at John F. Kennedy International Airport, 73 FR 3510 (Jan. 18, 2008), as most recently extended 85 FR 58258 (Sep. 18, 2020). The slot coordination parameters for JFK are set forth in this Order.

3 For additional information on COVID–19 impacts at designated IATA Level 2 and 3 airports in the United States and actions taken by the FAA to preserve stability through the Summer 2020 scheduling season, see Notice of extension of limited waiver of the minimum slot usage requirement, 85 FR 63335 (Oct. 7, 2020).
Schedules Information Manual (SSIM) Chapter 6 may be used. The WSG provides additional information on schedule submissions at Level 2 and Level 3 airports. Some carriers at JFK manage and track slots through FAA-assigned Slot ID numbers corresponding to an arrival or departure slot in a particular half-hour on a particular day of the week and date. The FAA has recently initiated a similar voluntary process for tracking schedules at EWR with Reference IDs, and certain carriers are managing their schedules accordingly. These are primarily U.S. and Canadian carriers that have the highest frequencies and considerable schedule changes throughout the season and can benefit from a simplified exchange of information not dependent on full flight details. Carriers are encouraged to submit schedule requests at those airports using Slot or Reference IDs.

As stated in the WSG, schedule facilitation at a Level 2 airport is based on the following: (1) Schedule adjustments are mutually agreed upon between the airlines and the facilitator; (2) the intent is to avoid exceeding the airport’s coordination parameters; (3) the concepts of historic precedence and series of slots do not apply at Level 2 airports; although WSG recommends giving priority to approved services that plan to operate unchanged from the previous equivalent season at Level 2 airports, and (4) the facilitator should adjust the smallest number of flights by the least amount of time necessary to avoid exceeding the airport’s coordination parameters. Consistent with the WSG, the success of Level 2 in the United States depends on the voluntary cooperation of all carriers.

The FAA considers several factors and priorities as it reviews schedule and slot requests at Level 2 and Level 3 airports, which are consistent with the WSG, including—historic slots or services from the previous equivalent season over new demand for the same services, traffic control indicates could be accepted for that hour, commonly known as “called” rates. The FAA also reviews the actual number of arrivals and departures that operated in the same hour. Generally, the FAA uses the higher of the two numbers, called actual, to identify trends and schedule review purposes. Some dates are excluded from analysis, such as during periods when extended airport closures or construction could affect capacity.

The FAA typically determines an airport’s average hourly capacity or typical throughput for Level 2 airports by reviewing hourly data on the arrival and departure rates that air traffic control indicates could be accepted for that hour, commonly known as “called” rates. The FAA also reviews the actual number of arrivals and departures that operated in the same hour. Generally, the FAA uses the higher of the two numbers, called actual, to identify trends and schedule review purposes. Some dates are excluded from analysis, such as during periods when extended airport closures or construction could affect capacity.

Airport-Specific Updates

EWR General Update

As stated in prior notices, the FAA regularly monitors operations and performance metrics at EWR to identify ways to improve operational efficiency and achieve delay reductions in a Level 2 environment. Access to EWR and the New York City area generally remains coveted. Requests for flights at EWR have exceeded the desired scheduling limits in multiple hours. The FAA has regularly indicated that schedule adjustments are advised for requests for new or retimed operations into periods when demand is at or above scheduling limits and worked with parties to properly identify alternative times that were available. In some cases, carriers have been able to swap with other carriers for their preferred times if the FAA is unable to offer the requested time. Carriers may continue to seek swaps in order to operate within periods in which operations are at the scheduling limits. However, swaps should be reported to the FAA as carriers are expected to operate consistent with the runway times on record with the FAA.

For the Summer 2021 season, the desired hourly scheduling limit remains at 79 operations and 43 operations per half-hour. Based on historical demand and an increase in operations in “shoulder” periods adjacent to the busiest hours before the COVID–19 public health emergency, most hours are now at the desired scheduling limits. To help with a balance between arrivals and departures, the desired maximum number of scheduled arrivals or departures, respectively, is 43 in an hour and 24 in a half-hour. This would allow some higher levels of operations in certain periods (not to exceed the
hourly limits) and some recovery from lower demand in adjacent periods.

Consistent with past practice at EWR, the FAA will accept flights above the limits if the flights were operated, or treated as operated, by the same carrier on a regular basis in the previous corresponding season (i.e., Summer 2020).

Consistent with the WSG, carriers are asked for their voluntary cooperation to adjust schedules to meet the scheduling limits in order to minimize potential congestion and delay. New operations will be offered alternative times unless the period is below the FAA’s desired scheduling limits.7 Consistent with this approach, the FAA intends to offer alternative times in response to any new flights for the Summer 2021 scheduling season if operations are at or above the applicable scheduling limits. However, the FAA notes that there may be availability for ad hoc passenger and cargo operations due to temporary COVID–19-related service changes.

EWR Assessment Status

As indicated in the EWR schedule submission notice for the Summer 2020 scheduling season, the FAA is assessing the impacts on performance of peak period reductions and other schedule changes, such as Southwest Airlines’ cessation of operations at EWR, as well as the impacts on competition, in close coordination with the Office of the Secretary of Transportation.8 This assessment is ongoing; the FAA intends to publish additional information on the outcome of this assessment in the future. The sudden, drastic disruption caused by COVID–199 affects the analysis and the relevant long-term effects of operational, performance, and demand-related changes at EWR.

Pending further study, the FAA does not at this time invite replacing or “backfilling” the peak morning and afternoon/evening operations that Southwest Airlines conducted during Winter 2018/2019 and Summer 2019, to the extent the new operations would exceed the current desired scheduling limits. There may be availability for ad hoc passenger and cargo operations due to temporary COVID–19-related service changes.

Construction Updates

The FAA is aware of preliminary plans by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) to reconstruct Runway 4R/22L at EWR. The FAA is closely monitoring the scope and timing of this project currently expected to start in Spring 2021 along with the impacts of other ongoing terminal and taxiway construction. The FAA plans to work with the PANYNJ and carriers to assess operational impacts and potential changes in delays and to develop mitigation strategies, as appropriate. In addition, construction projects are upcoming or underway at JFK, LAX, and ORD. For additional information, see https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ato/service_units/systemops/perf_analysis/sys_cap_eval/.

The construction plans for each of the airports is subject to change. The airport operators regularly meet with the FAA, airlines, and other stakeholders to review construction plans, identify operational or other issues, and develop mitigation strategies. Carriers interested in additional information on construction plans should contact the airport operator to obtain further details or information on stakeholder discussions.

Issued in Washington, DC, on October 8, 2020.

Virginia T. Boyle,
Acting Vice President, System Operations Services.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: By letter dated April 10, 2020, Mr. Singh (the petitioner) submitted a petition requesting that the Agency investigate 2013 Mercedes-Benz E350 vehicles for alleged premature rear brake line corrosion failure. Interested persons may petition NHTSA requesting that the Agency initiate an investigation to determine whether a motor vehicle or item of replacement equipment does not comply with an applicable motor vehicle safety standard or contains a defect that relates to motor vehicle safety (49 U.S.C. 30162(a)(2); 49 CFR 552.1). Upon receipt of a properly filed petition, the Agency conducts a technical review of the petition, material submitted with the petition and any additional information (49 CFR 552.6). After conducting the technical review and considering appropriate factors, which may include, but are not limited to, the nature of the complaint, allocation of Agency resources, Agency priorities, the likelihood of uncovering sufficient evidence to establish the existence of a defect, and the likelihood of success in any necessary enforcement litigation, the Agency will grant or deny the petition. See 49 CFR 552.8.

The petitioner alleges that his 2013 Mercedes E350 sedan with approximately 37,000 miles has a safety defect due to rusted brake lines. Mr. Singh stated that his vehicle was inspected by a Mercedes-Benz dealership and received an estimate of $3,300 to repair the rear brake lines. He attached supplemental information including photos of his vehicle’s rear brake lines, that had visible corrosion, as well as a service invoice from the brake line repair. He does not allege that his vehicle experienced brake line leakage or any effect on brake system performance before the corrosion concern was detected and repaired in a dealer inspection.


8 See Notice of Submission Deadline for Newark Liberty International Airport for the Summer 2020 Scheduling Season, 84 FR at 52582.

9 For example, the FAA’s Operational Network (OPSNET) data shows total operations for April to September 2020 were 73.7% lower than the same period in 2019.