



NOTAMs

Every pilot planning a flight knows that it is necessary to check for aviation weather information. An equally important part of flight planning is to obtain all pertinent NOTAMs. Which NOTAMs should be checked? Is it sufficient to verify only the NOTAMs for the departure and destination aerodromes? Some believe it is; however, it is not.

An example is when the President of the United States visited Ottawa, Ont., from November 30 to December 1, 2004. Pilots planning to depart from or land at the Ottawa/Rockcliffe airport (CYRO) were not aware of the large areas of restricted airspace in the Ottawa region if they only checked the NOTAMs for CYRO. The information regarding the restricted airspace was disseminated and stored under the NOTAM files for the Montréal flight information region (FIR) (CZUL), the Toronto FIR (CZYZ) and the Ottawa/MacDonald Cartier Airport (CYOW). A NOTAM issued under NOTAM file CYND—for Ottawa/Rockcliffe and other aerodromes in the area—made reference to the Montréal FIR NOTAM.

Canadian Aviation Regulation (CAR) 602.71 requires that “the pilot-in-command of an aircraft shall, before commencing a flight, be familiar with the available information that is appropriate to the intended flight.” Further, the *Transport Canada Aeronautical Information Manual (TC AIM)* section RAC 3.3 indicates there are three categories of NOTAM files: National NOTAMs, FIR NOTAMs and aerodrome NOTAMs. In addition, TC AIM section MAP 5.6.8 describes the type of information disseminated in each category. Before commencing a flight, pilots must ensure that each NOTAM file category has been reviewed in order to be familiar with all NOTAM information appropriate to the intended flight.

So what is the big deal if all pertinent NOTAMs are not checked?

Aside from breaking the law, going against the statements in the TC AIM and poor flight planning practices, in some instances where the restricted airspace is patrolled by armed interceptor aircraft, an unwary pilot who violates the airspace just might experience a “close encounter” of the worst kind. Think about it!

Where can you find out which NOTAM file should be consulted for a specific aerodrome? In the *Canada Flight Supplement (CFS)* Section B, Aerodrome/Facility Directory.

EXAMPLE ONLY - NOT FOR NAVIGATION

OTTAWA / HULL (EXPRESSAIR) QC (Heli)		CTH4 ← 1
REF	N45 27 52 W75 44 12 14°W UTC-5(4) Elev 180' A5000 A5002	
OPR	102662 Canada Inc (Expressair) 819-778-2112 Cert PPR	
PF	B-1 C-2,3,5,6	
FLY PLAN	(bil) NOTAM FILE CYND ← 3 Québec 866-GOMÉTEO or 866-WXBRIEF	
PAD DATA	65' x 65' 80' x 80' RCR No win maint	
COMM	ATF Monitor Gatineau rdo 122.3	
PRO	Arr/dep btwn 010°-060° & btwn 260°-320°	

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1. Aerodrome location indicator 2. Flight planning section 3. NOTAM file