

RTCA, Inc.
1140 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 1020
Washington, DC 20036-4001 USA

Free Flight Action Plan Update 1

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Prepared by:
Free Flight Steering Committee

Copies of this document may be obtained from

RTCA, Inc.

Telephone: 202-833-9339

Facsimile: 202-833-9434

Internet: www.rtca.org

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Foreword

This report was prepared as an update to the earlier document entitled *Free Flight Action Plan* published by RTCA on August 15, 1996. It is intended to provide the current status of free flight initiatives as compiled by the RTCA Free Flight Steering Committee. The Free Flight Steering Committee was formed under the auspices of RTCA, Inc. at the request of the FAA and in response to the *Final Report of RTCA Task Force 3, Free Flight Implementation*.

The objectives of the Free Flight Steering Committee are:

- To establish an agreed-to implementation strategy and milestones;
- To periodically review government and industry progress in meeting implementation commitments, via the use of appropriate metrics; and
- To identify new free flight implementation opportunities as well as events/situations that are inhibiting progress and review actions that are taken.

As a private, not-for-profit corporation, RTCA, Inc. addresses operational concepts, requirements, and industry standards for aviation. The organization's mission is to advance the art and science of aviation, and aviation electronic systems, for the benefit of the public. Volunteers from the entire aviation community help develop RTCA products. These products include consensus-based recommendations addressing the implementation of new operational capabilities, performance standards, as well as technical guidance documents and special topic reports that focus on the application of electronics technology to meet the aviation community's needs. RTCA conducts essentially all its work while functioning as a Federal Advisory Committee.

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Free Flight Action Plan Joint Goals Statement

The overall guiding principles for moving toward mature Free Flight were developed over a 2 year period by an RTCA sponsored Select Committee on Free Flight involving both industry and Government representatives and by RTCA's Task Force 3 on Free Flight implementation. Task Force 3 approximately 250 representatives from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the aviation community. In October 1995, the task force published the following guiding principles:

- Ensure that the transition to Free Flight will not compromise safety.
- Expand the Free Flight definition to include strategic flight planning and ground phases of operation.
- Emphasize initiatives that give users a high return on investment.
- Ensure that the transition to Free Flight is benefits-driven.
- Emphasize the need for collaborative planning.
- Emphasize procedural improvements with proven technology.
- Consider end-to-end impact and benefits when planning improvements.
- Address human factors issues during all stages of development.
- Assess benefits when possible prior to implementation.
- Utilize modeling and analysis to anticipate operational impacts on the National Airspace System (NAS) users and service providers.
- Accommodate users with various levels of equipment during the transition to Free Flight.

The FAA and industry agree with the guiding principles. The joint Government/Industry Free Flight Steering Committee (referred to as the "Steering Committee" hereafter) shall agree to use these principles in deliberations and preparation of further recommendations on the implementation of Free Flight.