

Skyguide posts best-ever punctuality performance with over 93% of flights on time

Geneva, 6 February 2009. With approximately 3 380 flights a day, the volumes of air traffic managed and monitored by skyguide in 2008 remained nearly unchanged from its prior-year level. Skyguide also improved its punctuality performance over the same period: more than 93% of all flights were handled without delays – a best-ever performance.

Varying traffic trends

The nearly 1.24 million flights (or approx. 3 380 a day) which skyguide handled in 2008 marked a new record high for the company, even if the year-on-year increase of 0.3% was far smaller than it had been in previous years. Traffic trends also varied in the course of the year: while sizeable volume increases were posted for the first two months, traffic for March to September remained largely at prior-year levels; and as the world financial crisis began to bite, the last three months saw a 9% traffic decline in the airspace controlled by skyguide.

Movements up in all areas

Flight movement numbers are a key means of determining the workload being handled by an air traffic management unit. For 2008, movement volumes increased 0.3% at skyguide's area control centres, which manage and monitor all en-route traffic and some of the traffic in terminal control areas, and were also up 2.1% for Arrival and Departure Control. The Geneva area control centre did, however, see a 0.7% decline in movements handled – the first it has experienced since 2001. The Zurich area control centre reported a further 1.1% increase in movement volumes handled.

Flight movements handled			
	2008	2007	Change 07/08
Area control centres			
Geneva	686 941	691 666	- 0.7%
Zurich	812 149	803 302	+ 1.1%
Total	1 499 090	1 494 968	+ 0.3%
Arrival/Departure Control			
Bern	12 343	13 593	- 9.2%
Donaueschingen	1 544	1 528	+ 1.0%
Friedrichshafen	18 589	17 694	+ 5.1%
Geneva	175 863	173 135	+ 1.6%
Grenchen	4 867	4 363	+ 11.6%
Les Eplatures	1 685	1 177	+ 43.2%
Lugano	10 118	10 843	- 6.7%
Sion	5 147	5 120	+ 0.5%
St. Gallen Altenrhein	9 598	9 587	+ 0.1%
Zurich	262 629	255 146	+ 2.9%
Total	502 383	492 186	+ 2.1%

Best-ever punctuality

Skyguide handled over 93% of its daily traffic volume on time in 2008 – a substantial improvement of one-third fewer delayed flights than the previous year. The impressive punctuality performance can be ascribed to a number of factors. The company has taken various actions to increase airspace capacity such as reappraising sector capacity at its two operating locations, a move made possible by such technical innovations as the adoption of the stripless¹ system in Geneva. The capacity available was also used more flexibly, and the company increased personnel numbers at its Zurich operation in the course of the year, both of which helped further reduce delays. Last but not least, the slower traffic growth and more favourable weather conditions (compared to 2007) also contributed to this punctuality result.

A factsheet with more detailed information, tables and charts is available here:
http://www.skyguide.ch/en/MediaRelations/MediaReleases/ArchivedReleases/06_02_2009_performance_2008_factsheet_en.pdf

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Skyguide is responsible for providing air navigation services within Swiss airspace and in the airspace of certain adjoining regions in neighbouring countries. The company guides the civil and military aircraft entrusted to its care – some 3 400 flights a day or 1.24 million a year – through some of the busiest and most complex airspace in Europe. Skyguide is a non-profit limited company which has its head office in Geneva. The majority of its shares are held by the Swiss Confederation. The company generates annual operating revenue of over CHF 369 million and employs some 1 400 people at 14 locations in Switzerland.

¹ "Strips" are slips of paper containing the key details (identification, heading, flight level, etc.) of the aircraft flying through an air traffic controller's control sector. Since the adoption of the "stripless system" in 2006, these paper strips have been replaced with an electronic solution. As a result, the controller workstations in Geneva are now fully digitized.