

Who knows where you're going?

If you fly PGL, you call Big Matty first to book the aeroplane, so there's at least one person who knows (or suspects) that you're going flying. But of course it's not Matt's job to know what time you expect to be home, or to worry if you don't turn up. So let's look at the options for telling someone about your flight.

There are three types of notification you can put in – an ICAO Flight Notification, a SARTIME Flight Notification, and a Flight Note. AIP ENR 1.10 lists some requirements regarding submitting them.

ICAO Flight Notification

This is the one you must submit if you want to go into Class C or D airspace (other than the likes of Jandakot). You don't need to put a SARTIME on it, but why wouldn't you?

This is the more complex notification, and if you don't do it often you may need to look at AIP ENR 1.10 Appendix 2 for guidance. The best thing about doing it online, as everyone does these days, is that when you hit Submit, NAIPS spits it back at you if you've left something out or used a wrong format for something, and it won't accept it until you've got everything right.

If you put a SARTIME on it, the notification will go to CENSAR, and it will also go to whichever controllers need to know about your flight. So if you're planning to fly from Northam to Rotto via Perth, the information will go to Perth Area Control Centre and when you call Perth Centre on 135.25 for a clearance, they'll be expecting you.

Incidentally, if you want to practise submitting an ICAO Notification, enter NOSEND under Aircraft ID and when you hit Submit, it will either tell you where you've gone wrong, or accept it. ATS will then recognise it as a practice notification and ignore it.

SARTIME Flight Notification

This is a much simpler form because it doesn't need to go to any controllers. It only goes to CENSAR, so if you put this one in and then go looking for a clearance in CTA, they won't be expecting you, and chances are you won't get your clearance. The only details you need on a SARTIME notification are the ones the searchers need if they're going to come looking for you:

- Aircraft ID – who to call;
- Type – what the wreckage will look like;
- Departure, destination and significant points – where to look for the wreckage;
- POB – how many body bags to bring;
- SARTIME – when to start worrying about you;
- PIC details – who to call when you forget to cancel SAR.

Items such as departure time, speed, level, and wake turbulence category are not relevant because if they come looking for you, your SARTIME has expired, and your speed and height are probably both zero.

Because it's so straightforward, it should be a bit of a no-brainer to submit this if you're flying any distance at all. And as far as remembering to cancel SARTIME, set the alarm on your phone for 10 minutes or so before it expires.

Flight Note

There are some VFR operations for which you must notify someone of your intentions. That can mean a SARTIME Flight Notification, or the minimum requirement, which is a Flight Note. Also known as WIFESAR, MUMSAR or BESTMATESAR, you must use this or a SARTIME if you're flying:

- Over water;
- In a Designated Remote Area (the VFR Guide shows these);
- At night more than 120 nm from your departure point.

Because you're not sending it to Airservices, the format is not as prescribed as for the others, but a typical format is the one available on the CASA Forms page:

<https://www.casa.gov.au/sites/default/files/casa-04-5565-flight-note.pdf>.

The new CASR Part 91 Manual of Standards (MOS) states that the responsible person you leave it with must:

- Be at least 18;
- Have access to 2 phones;
- Satisfy you that they know how to contact JRCC and will do so if you're overdue.

The only real difference between this one and a SARTIME Flight Notification is that you're relying on the person you leave it with, and not CENSAR, to raise the alarm when you're overdue. The number to call is on the top of the form (1800 815 257). It's the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) in Canberra, which coordinates rescues, whether at sea or on land (Note: no "air", because let's face it, if they come looking for you you're either on land or in the sea!) This JRCC number is the same one that CENSAR will call to start a search. And if you've left a MUMSAR Flight Note, and mum panics and can't find the form and can't remember who to call, and she just calls 000, the call will end up in the hands of JRCC. You just need to hope that mum can remember the details of the flight and give the searchers something to go on.

Happy flying, and remember when you were a teenager and mum always wanted to know where you were going and who with, and what time you'd be home, she was just preparing you to be a pilot!