

## Business Aviation Collective | Schedulers Course

In this module I'll discuss why we flight follow and what's involved. I'll share a few insights and resources to make collecting and distributing flight following information.

Above all a flight follower adds another level of safety to the flight. They provide an extra set of eyes to watch weather, notams, and are a reliable contact for the pilots in flight. A dispatcher is required to release 121 scheduled airline flights and follow them to their completion. They have specific training requirements and have passed testing administered by the FAA. Their training allows them to assist the pilot with flight planning and gives them guidance as to what changes in the flight plan are most important to the crew enroute.

135 Flight Following requirements are a little different from 121. The requirement states the certificate holder must have procedures in place for locating a flight when a flight plan is not filed, that provides the certificate holder with the information required to be included in a VFR Flight plan...

A procedure for timely notification to the FAA if an aircraft is missing or overdue – 30 minutes past their arrival time. Provide a plan for communication if the plan is operating in an area where communication cannot be maintained such as flights flying over the ocean.

The regulation is vague and in practice typically what we see 135 operators doing is adding flight following duties to whomever is coordinating catering and ground transportation. There are many ways to organize a flight operations department and divide tasks but keeping a watch on the planes to be sure the takeoffs match the landings is everyone's job.

A duty of Flight Following is making the appropriate communications when an aircraft on a flight plan is overdue.

A plane is considered overdue when it has failed to arrive at its destination, that is it's 30 minutes past their ETA and you have lost communication with the plane. A flight is also considered overdue when it has failed to arrive at a compulsory reporting point or past their clearance void time or clearance limit. These are typically not known to the flight follower on the ground and are instead given to the pilot directly. They are monitored by Air Traffic Control.

– It would be highly unusual for a flight follower to not know where their business jet is for 30 minutes. If you are unable to find or contact your aircraft for 10 minutes I would start to worry.

Under Part 91 regulations a flight follower is Not required but may be required in the companies SOP. In the SOP for part 91 and 135 operators there will be an emergency procedure in place when a plane is deemed overdue.

These are some software available to help with scheduling and flight following. These programs are connected with data link providers who will send real time flight data.

-Trip Planning.biz

-FOS – Flight Operations System by Collins Aerospace

-PFM – Professional Flight Management

-Bart -

-Avianis

All of these software programs are complete aviation management tools. Among many things they help schedule trips, flight follow the trip, and maintain records for the flight department.

Key to knowing if a plane is overdue is monitoring their on / off time. Although we refer to it as on off, we should logically call it off on reports since the goal is every takeoff has a landing. Anyway... On/Off Reports monitor takeoff time and provide estimated time of arrival. Data link providers like Satcom, Airinc, and Honeywell will send reports via email when signed up to receive them. The data is generated from the aircraft ADSB system in the aircraft. This system improves safety and increases air traffic capacity. The data is tail number specific.

On Jan 1 2020 all aircraft are required to have ADSB system.

Video How ADSB works - [\(285\) How Does ADS-B Work? - YouTube](#)

A flight follower is the first to know if an aircraft is going to be late or if the aircraft diverts. Most diversions are due to weather and typically foreseen when weather is marginal and meets the minimums for the pilots to shoot the approach. During a diversion the flight crew is going to be very busy. It is common for a flight follower to not know the aircraft diverted until they land at the alternate. This happens less now than it used to with the ADSB technology but it can happen.

Flight Aware is the best free flight tracking software. You can click around in it at Flight Aware . Com

Here you can track any and all air traffic. But what if you don't want your plane tracked??

Block your tail number. You can file a request to have your tail number blocked. You can also do the same with flight aware. You can have your aircraft flight information blocked to the general public but request access to just your organization. Flight aware is happy to do this...for a fee.

One may ask, Isn't the accessibility of flight information violating the privacy of people traveling on private aircraft? According to the Flight Aware website The answer is no. The aircraft being displayed on FlightAware are operating in public airspace. They are arriving and departing from airports with their identification number painted on the aircraft. They are broadcasting their whereabouts and intentions on public radio frequencies (although this broadcast is required by the FAA). They are all using services provided by the federal government. Accordingly, this information is completely public in many forms.

Last, know your companies Emergency Procedures for when a plane does go missing. The flight department should have a chain of contact of who to contact in case of the unthinkable.

In this module we reviewed why we flight follow and who is required to flight follow. We talked about ADSB and how this technology gives up to the second flight positioning data. We also reviewed how to help get your flights data off public sites for viewing. Happy Following

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