

**Final Report of RTCA Task Force 3  
Free Flight Implementation**

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**Prepared by RTCA Task Force 3  
October 26, 1995**

Copies of this document may be obtained from

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

Telephone: 202-833-9339  
Facsimile: 202-833-9434

Please call RTCA for price and ordering information.

## FOREWORD

This document was prepared by RTCA Task Force 3, *Free Flight Implementation*, and approved by RTCA on October 26, 1995.

RTCA, Inc., is a not-for-profit corporation formed to advance the art and science of aviation and aviation electronic systems for the benefit of the public. The organization functions as a Federal Advisory Committee and develops consensus based recommendations on contemporary aviation issues. RTCA's objectives include but are not limited to:

- coalescing aviation system user and provider technical requirements in a manner that helps government and industry meet their mutual objectives and responsibilities;
- analyzing and recommending solutions to the system technical issues that aviation faces as it continues to pursue increased safety, system capacity and efficiency;
- developing consensus on the application of pertinent technology to fulfill user and provider requirements, including development of minimum operational performance standards for electronic systems and equipment that support aviation; and
- assisting in developing the appropriate technical material upon which positions for the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Telecommunication Union and other appropriate international organizations can be based.

The organization's recommendations are often used as the basis for government and private sector decisions as well as the foundation for many Federal Aviation Administration Technical Standard Orders.

Since RTCA is not an official agency of the United States Government, its recommendations may not be regarded as statements of official government policy unless so enunciated by the U. S. government organization or agency having statutory jurisdiction over any matters to which the recommendations relate.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government and the entire civil aviation community stand at the threshold of a great opportunity to safely re-order the air traffic system. In order to seize upon this opportunity, RTCA Task Force 3 offers this report with recommendations for actions to implement the concept of free flight. The Task Force provided an excellent opportunity for system users and providers to come to grips with challenges which are currently limiting the system capacity and draining valuable organizational resources and capital. The guiding principles used throughout the task force deliberations are contained in Chapter 2. A complete list of recommendations along with a short rationale for each is contained in Chapter 6.

A dominant recommendation is made to enhance the FAA/aviation community collaboration during the transition process to provide savings for both the FAA/DoD and the user community.

**\*\*A Within six months after the FAA receives the Task Force report, a government/industry Free Flight Steering Committee, formed under the auspices of the RTCA as a Federal Advisory Committee, should meet. The objectives of this committee should be:**

- 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.
- To identify new free flight implementation opportunities as well as events/situations that are inhibiting progress and review actions that are taken.

### International Cooperation

While the primary objective of this Task Force is to provide the FAA Administrator with consensus views regarding the implementation of free flight in the US national airspace, the broader goal is to produce a seamless global ATM capability. A major contribution was made by Mr. B. O'Keeffe from Airservices Australia and Mr. V.K.H. Eggers of the Danish CAA and European Civil Aviation Conference. Their recommendation and that of Task Force 3 is that substantial international participation in the new Steering Committee will have a salutary effect on future efforts for developing a universal global ATM. To that end, the Task Force recommends that this free flight Steering Committee include appropriate international representatives.

Following the milestone reports on navigation and data link communications by RTCA Task Force 1<sup>1</sup>, RTCA Task Force 2<sup>2</sup>, and the *Report of the RTCA Board of Director's Select Committee on Free Flight*<sup>3</sup>, comes this RTCA Task Force 3 report: *Free Flight Implementation*. Task Force 3's report defines the implementation of a concept to move from today's rather rigid and largely procedural, analog, and ground-based system comprising HF/VHF-voice communications, terrestrial-based navigation systems, radar surveillance, and limited air traffic decision support to that of the future flexible collaborative system by

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<sup>1</sup> RTCA Task Force 1, *GNSS Transition and Implementation Strategy*, September 1992, RTCA, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> RTCA Task Force 2, *The Transition to Digital Communications, Urgent Needs, Practical Means*, December 1993, RTCA, Inc.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the RTCA Board of Directors Select Committee on Free Flight*, January 18, 1995, RTCA, Inc.