

Q300s at Uncontrolled Aerodromes

With Air New Zealand's Q300s now flying to more uncontrolled aerodromes, this is a heads-up to general aviation pilots about how to co-exist with them.

From September 2016, the Beech 1900 of Eagle Airways will be withdrawn from Air New Zealand service.

Most of the ports that Eagle served are now being served by Air Nelson and its fleet of 23 Bombardier Q300s.

Those ports include the uncontrolled aerodromes of Kerikeri, Whangarei, Taupo, Paraparaumu, Hokitika, and Timaru, all with MBZs. They will also conduct the occasional charter flight to other places.

Vector spoke to Andrew Aldridge, Air Nelson Safety Manager, and Steve Scott, Air Nelson Technical Manager, to find out more about how the Q300 is operated.

Vector: What is different about the Q300?

Steve: It's fitted with dual integrated Flight Management Systems that give the Q300 the ability to do GPS-guided (RNAV) instrument approaches. We also have automated vertical navigation guidance that allows us to plan and follow a vertical flight path. Of course, we also carry the VNCs related to the aerodromes we visit.

Vector: How do you operate at uncontrolled aerodromes?

Andrew: We have a policy of predictive tracking, which means that the aircraft will always follow the published instrument approach for the duty runway in all weather conditions. Local users can find out from the AIP where the instrument tracks go, or ask someone local who is IFR rated, or just check out

the direction we come from. We fly the approaches with vertical guidance enabled which provides predictable heights and allows the crew more time to interact with local traffic.

Steve: Within MBZs we operate the Q300 at a maximum of 160 kts. If the traffic situation is unresolved or complex, we encourage our crews to slow down or enter a hold.

Vector: How do you know what traffic is operating around uncontrolled aerodromes?

Andrew: We make radio calls well ahead of entering an MBZ to allow us to build a picture of the local situation, and we keep that radio dialogue going. To assist us with sighting local traffic, the Q300 is fitted with an airborne collision avoidance system (ACAS). For ACAS to work most effectively, local traffic must be using a Mode C transponder. If a GA pilot has a Mode C transponder, using it when the Q300s are operating makes a huge difference to our ability to identify and avoid local traffic.

Vector: What advice would you give to GA pilots out flying when the Q300 arrives?

Andrew: If you have a transponder, make sure it's operating. Otherwise, make sure you're on the correct frequency for the airspace you are in, and make the required calls. Safety relies on us all doing the right thing.

Steve: Also look out for the Q300 pulsing landing lights on the wings. But don't bank on the published timetables. You'll find

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Photo courtesy of Air New Zealand.

Air New Zealand is bringing its fleet of Q300s to some uncontrolled aerodromes.

the Q300 can operate well outside the normal scheduled times as we can be delayed for operational reasons.

Vector: How should pilots communicate with the Q300?

Andrew: First of all, don't be scared to make contact with the aircraft. We will make and accept calls in plain English if needed to understand the situation. The Q300 pilots will often provide position reports as a range and bearing. GA pilots should also remember that they are possibly more familiar with the nuances of the local area than many of the Q300 pilots are, so instead of saying 'overhead Carter's Ford', try saying something like 'overhead Carter's Ford, 10 NE of the field'. If you don't understand where the Q300 is or what its intentions are, please don't stay quiet.

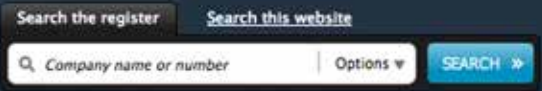
Vector: What happens if a GA pilot thinks that they're in conflict with the Q300?

Andrew: We know that the Q300 has no special priority in uncontrolled airspace, and the normal see and avoid rules apply to all conflicts. If required, we will adjust the flight path or wait for you to finish and clear the area. The key thing is to communicate early and make yourself visible, ideally with a transponder. As a commercial airline operator, we have a very low appetite for taking risks, so you are quite likely to find that the Q300 will break off an approach if there is an unresolved conflict situation.

Steve: All our pilots can remember what it is like to be learning to fly and all have had previous GA experience. At heart, we are all aircraft enthusiasts. ■



COMPANIES OFFICE



Your Company Name is Part of Your Certificate

As an air operator you need to be aware that your certificate is issued to your company as registered with the Companies Office. If you wish to change its name, or sell your company, you need to know the implications for your operator certificate.

"The certificate is issued to the company," says Jeanette Lusty, the CAA's Acting Manager, Special Flight Operations and Recreational Aviation.

"If a company wants to change its name, it's usually pretty straightforward if the company itself doesn't change. The CAA just needs to be notified of the change within that company and there are forms for such amendments."

But if a new company is formed, the situation is quite different.

"If a new company number is issued by the Companies Office, that changes our records, and it becomes a new certification."

Jeanette says a recent case highlights there is some confusion.

"We had a company that wanted to start a whole new company for various reasons. A new company is a new legal entity. They didn't realise they needed to apply for a new air operator certificate (AOC).

"Even if the new company has the same shareholders as the old one, it's a different legal entity once it has been issued with

a new Companies Office number. If a company name is used on an aircraft certificate of registration, that will also need to be re-issued.

"There's a good reason for this. Someone could buy a company with an AOC and circumvent the certification process. We need to be confident that the people involved are fit and proper, and resources are available. We have to ensure the integrity of the AOC.

"Also remember, that in cases where your Senior Persons change, you need to go through a process for that with the CAA," says Jeanette.

This will not affect sole traders or partnerships – only registered companies. Registered companies sometimes use "trading as" for a branding name – these will not be affected *unless* they are used on your certificate or are in your exposition.

For more information, see "Keeping your Exposition Relevant" in the May/June 2013 *Vector*. ■