

OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS

Air traffic controllers may face operational difficulties due to military flights, hazardous weather and traffic congestion.

1. What are the main problems of your area?
2. What should you do to solve the problem/problems?
3. How does weather affect the way you work?
4. In what cases may your workload increase?



Military operations in the area may **cause some difficulties**. Military operations are activities such as military training flights, test flights or shooting. Militaries can **impose temporary constraints (restrictions)**, they can **block (close) some airspace**, levels and airways. So, ATC must inform pilots about restricted areas, coordinate rerouting and provide navigational assistance to pilots if required (if necessary).

Hazardous (dangerous) weather may **bring some problems**. Thunderstorms, heavy precipitations, strong wind, heavy fog can cause delays, holding, diversions to the alternate or deviations from the track, which in turn can **lead to extra coordination** with adjacent sectors and additional communication with pilots. Air traffic controllers must provide safe rerouting and help pilots avoid weather. It is a major trouble in summer and winter.

Another problem which can occur is intensive traffic. There are peak hours (rush hours) when traffic volume is high (intensive traffic). Besides, some hot spots in the area pose a problem for ATC operations (e.g. intersection of several airways). It can **increase ATC workload**, strain and pressure significantly. In case of traffic congestion controllers have to adjust speed, change flight level, direct aircraft to the holding pattern. It can **result in delays**.

Normally ATC equipment does not cause any problems. In the event of equipment malfunction or failure, there are **backup systems** to continue operations. Engineers on duty help solve problems with equipment, check and repair it.

Sometimes controllers **experience minor issues (problems) with** radiotelephony communication (e.g. interferences on a primary frequency). In this case air traffic controllers have to change the frequency and notify (inform) all concerned: the supervisor, engineering staff and pilots.

Large flocks of birds are a **common problem for aerodrome controllers**. Bird impacts (strikes) can lead to a missed approach or aborted take-off. ATC must warn pilots about the hazard and provide a safe landing and departure. Also, controllers must inform aerodrome services about birds in the vicinity of the airfield.