



Department
for Transport

Situation Report 3

Gatwick Airport Disruption: Drones

SITREP DETAILS

Date	20/12/2018
Time	20:00 [Information Cut Off: 19:00]
Contact	Transport Security Operations Centre (TSOC) [REDACTED]

HEADLINE SUMMARY

- Gatwick airport remains closed until further notice, with Easyjet and Virgin have cancelled all remaining flights for this evening.
- [REDACTED]
- Gatwick was due to have 730 flights arrive and depart today, with 110,000 passengers due to fly.
- This has caused widespread disruption with many flights being cancelled or diverted to other airports. Airlines are putting arrangements in place to redirect passengers back to the original airport destination.
- This incident is being regarded by industry as malicious attempt to disrupt operations.
- Secretary of State recorded an interview with the BBC, warning the individuals could face up to five years in prison. He confirmed the temporary lift of night flight restrictions at other airports, likely to be London.

AVIATION IMPACTS

- Gatwick were due to fly 110,000 passengers in and out of Gatwick today.
- EasyJet and Virgin have cancelled all flights tonight, with the aim of being able to start-up operations normally tomorrow morning.
- There are now no scheduled flights to take off from Gatwick until further notice. Gatwick airport and the airlines are reviewing arrangements for passengers in the airport and priority flights.
- DfT have lifted night-flight restriction for Stansted, Gatwick and Heathrow.
- Gatwick have stood-up their incident response team, providing food vouchers and water.
- Airlines have made transport arrangements and hotel accommodation for displaced passengers.
- Over a 130,000 passengers are expected to fly in or out of Gatwick tomorrow

(21st December 2018).

OTHER AIRPORTS

- There are currently no flights diverting to other airports.
- Those passengers divert to other airports last night and this morning have been offered transport back to Gatwick. Both Virgin (two flights to Orlando) and BA have put additional flights on at Heathrow and bused passengers from Gatwick to Heathrow.
- Ryanair have operated an additional six flights from Stansted.

AVIATION SECURITY

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

DRONES POLICY

- Endangering an aircraft carries a penalty of an unlimited fine or 5 years in prison.
- There are many laws in place for how drones must be flown including not within 50 metres of people, buildings or 150 meters congested area. These carry penalties of £2.5k.
- As of 30th July 2018 it is illegal to fly drones above 400ft or within 1km of an airport boundary (unless you have permission from the CAA or Air Traffic Control respectively). Penalties of up to £2.5k apply.

OTHER MODE IMPACTS

Rail:

- Trains are continuing to run to Gatwick Airport with no operational issues or cancellations.
- Messaging has been communicated to passengers on stations along the routes to Gatwick airport, including London Victoria and Clapham Junction advising of the disruption.
- No passenger handling issues reported by GTR at Gatwick Airport station
- Passengers are being strongly advised not to travel to Gatwick through their websites, announcements and social media. This approach appears to be working.
- Ticket acceptance is in place – including allowing passengers with today's tickets to travel tomorrow and ticket acceptance to Luton and Edinburgh.

OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

- FCO's Consular Contact Centre has received 4 calls from British people

overseas affected by the incident.

[REDACTED]

- DfT are liaising with Home Office OSCT and FCO.

- [REDACTED]

MEDIA AND COMMS

- The disruption at Gatwick continues to run widely across broadcast and print and remains the top story on bulletins and news website.
- Reports are now leading on the news that the army has been called in to hunt down the drone pilot(s) as the BBC reports that flights will be cancelled until at least 19:00 this evening.
- Press Office has recently taken calls from print journalists at the Daily Mirror and Daily Telegraph asking where the Secretary of State is and why he has not appeared in public to discuss the disruption. Press Office has issued a statement from the SoS (included below) to all national publications, apart from The Times, explaining that the government is working with the police to resolve the issue.
- The Secretary of State recorded an interview with the BBC in which he warned that the individuals responsible for this face up to five years in jail. He confirmed that we are temporarily lifting night flight restrictions at other airports. He said these airports are likely to be based in London and stressed this would be a temporary measure.
- DfT Press Office have taken calls from a number of print outlets asking for further clarification of the current laws – the Guardian has been particularly interested in the July 2017 announcement about rules to better regulate drone use and an update on this legislation. Press office have provided factual background on this, along with our cleared statement.

Statement from the Secretary of State:

Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling said:

“This is clearly a very serious ongoing incident in which substantial drones have been used to bring about the temporary closure of a major international airport.

“The people who were involved should face the maximum possible custodial sentence for the damage they have done.

“Government is doing everything it can to support Sussex police.”

Background

- In May, the Government amended the Air Navigation Order 2016 to make it illegal to fly drones above 400 feet and within one kilometre of an airport boundary. This came into effect in July.
- We urge all passengers to check with the airport for the latest information on their flight.
- These drones have been flown recklessly and negligently endangered aircraft, if the operators are found to have committed a criminal offence they could face up to five years in prison.
- The Government plan to publish a response to its drone consultation the New Year including possible frameworks for the testing and use of counter-drone technology that could be used to protect sensitive national infrastructure from possible malicious drone incursions

Passengers should check with the airport before travelling, more information can be found at: <https://www.gatwickairport.com/flights/flight-disruption/>

BATTLE RHYTHM

20th December 2018:

[REDACTED]

21st December 2018:

[REDACTED]