

**SAFETY BULLETIN**[www.airservicesaustralia.com](http://www.airservicesaustralia.com)**07 December 2010****Meeting ATC level requirements**

ATC frequently uses level requirements in CTA to provide separation with other traffic. Level requirements may take the form of an ad hoc requirement to reach a level, either on climb or descent, by a distance or time, or a standard level requirement on a SID or STAR. There have been a number of recent incidents in which pilots have not met a level requirement, resulting in a breakdown of separation with other traffic.

**Accepting an ATC level requirement**

It is the responsibility of the pilot in command when accepting an ATC level requirement, including a clearance on a SID or STAR that has such a requirement, to comply with the requirement. In assessing whether it will be possible to meet a requirement, there are many factors to consider. Incident reports have shown that items that require careful consideration include:

- the effects of possible wind and temperature variations on aircraft performance
- automation issues, including the time required to program flight management systems
- the ability of the crew to monitor and assess progress against the requirement.

Where aircraft performance is likely to be a limiting factor, for example when accepting a level requirement near top of climb, it is necessary to ensure that there is sufficient performance in hand to cater for contingencies.

**If unable to accept an ATC level requirement**

If you are not able to meet a proposed level requirement, you should refuse the clearance using the phrase 'UNABLE'. Alternatively, you may propose or request a different clearance to enable you to meet the requirement, for example on a STAR "REQUEST TRACK STRETCHING TO MEET THE [...] REQUIREMENT".

### **If unable to meet a level requirement, once accepted**

When a level requirement has been accepted, it is necessary to monitor progress against the requirement. Sometimes circumstances or conditions can change quickly and if at any stage it becomes apparent that a level requirement may not be met, **it is essential that you notify ATC as soon as possible so that they can begin to formulate an alternative separation plan.**

### **Important**

A challenge from ATC about your ability to meet a requirement indicates that the controller has assessed that your progress toward meeting the requirement is in doubt.

You should take such a challenge seriously and carefully re-assess your progress against the requirement.

However, do not rely on ATC to alert you – this may not always be possible, particularly outside surveillance coverage.

**If, after accepting an ATC Level Requirement, you are unable to comply you need to notify ATC as soon as possible to ensure that separation with other traffic is not compromised.**

### **Further information**

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