

# Icelandic Airports & Charts

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# Airport Briefings

Airport specified briefings for aerodromes within BIRD FIR

# BIKF - Keflavík

# International Airport

## Overview

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Keflavík International Airport is Iceland's primary international gateway and the main hub for long-haul and transatlantic operations across the North Atlantic. Located approximately 50 km southwest of Reykjavík, Keflavík serves as a strategic midpoint between Europe and North America and handles a high volume of oceanic, ETOPS, cargo, military, and international passenger traffic.

The airport is dominated by international operations, with Icelandair operating an extensive route network to Europe and North America. Cargo flights, NATO-related traffic, and business aviation are also common. Domestic traffic generally operates from Reykjavík Airport (BIRK), though some regional and positioning flights may use Keflavík.

Weather conditions at Keflavík can be highly dynamic throughout the year. Strong winds, low visibility, icing, turbulence, and rapidly changing cloud bases are common and require careful planning and aircraft handling.

## Available Stands

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<https://stands.vatsim-scandinavia.org/?icao=BIKFframeless=true>

## Use of stands

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Area	Stands	Assigned to
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Main Terminal Apron	1-17	International passenger operations
Terminal Remote East Apron	71-78	International passenger operations
Terminal Remote West Apron	40-46	International passenger operations
West Apron		Military Operations
East Apron		Private / Cargo Operations

Widebody aircraft are commonly assigned to suitable terminal stands or remote stands depending on availability. Remote stand operations are frequent during peak traffic periods.

## IFR Clearance

Initial contact is with Clearance Delivery, reporting:

- Callsign
- Stand number
- ATIS identification letter
- Destination

Example: “Keflavík Delivery, ICE6MC stand 12, Airbus A320 with information Bravo, request IFR clearance to London Heathrow.”

Pilots unable to comply with published SIDs due to aircraft or navigation limitations should advise ATC immediately on first contact.

Oceanic clearances for westbound NAT operations are normally obtained prior to departure and pilots should ensure route uplinks and flight plans are verified before pushback.

## Push-back

Most terminal stands require pushback procedures due to apron layout constraints.

ATC may issue:

- Straight-back push
- Tail east/west push
- Face north/south push instructions
- TRP (Tug Release Point) instructions

Where a TRP (Tug Release Point) is assigned, aircraft should continue pushback or towing procedures until reaching the instructed release point before disconnecting the tug, unless otherwise instructed by ATC or ground handling personnel.

During high traffic periods, expect delayed push approvals due to limited taxiway availability and crossing traffic.

Pilots should remain on stand until pushback clearance has been received from Ground.

## Taxi

Taxi instructions normally include the full taxi route.

Pilots are expected to:

- Read back all hold short instructions
- Exercise caution during low visibility operations
- Monitor for de-icing traffic during winter operations

Intersection departures may be offered during busy periods if operationally suitable.

Heavy jet and long-haul aircraft generally taxi for full-length departures.

## Runways

Keflavík International Airport operates two primary runways:

Runway	Length	Common Use
10/28	10,056 ft	Primary arrival/departure runway
01/19	10,020 ft	Secondary runway / crosswind operations

Runway selection depends heavily on:

- Wind conditions
- Crosswind limitations
- Traffic flow

Low visibility procedures (LVP) are frequently used during winter months.

## SIDs

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Standard Instrument Departures from Keflavík are heavily integrated into Icelandic and North Atlantic airspace structures.

Initial climb altitudes are assigned by ATC and must not be exceeded unless cleared.

Pilots should:

- Verify SID routing before taxi
- Ensure oceanic routes match filed flight plans
- Expect directs when traffic permits

If unable to comply with RNAV procedures, advise ATC for radar vectors or alternative departure instructions.

## Important Note When Departing

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Keflavík IFR departures are frequently handed over shortly before departure.

Example: ICE6MC, When airborne [contact XXX/monitor UNICOM] on XXX.XX, winds XXX degrees XX knots, runway XX, cleared for takeoff

## Arrival and STARs

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Keflavík arrivals frequently involve:

- Oceanic inbound transitions
- RNAV STARs
- Radar vectoring during peak operations

Pilots should preload expected arrivals and transitions before descent.

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Do not descend unless explicitly cleared by ATC. Receiving an arrival or STAR clearance does not automatically mean descent is approved.

Due to Icelandic terrain and rapidly changing weather, strict adherence to altitude restrictions is essential.

Direct routings are common when traffic conditions permit.

## Approach

Expect ILS approaches during normal operations.

Available approach types include:

Runway	Approach Types	Frequency	Course
10	ILS/LOC, RNP, VOR, NDB	109.50	102
28	ILS/LOC, RNP, VOR	108.50	282
01	ILS/LOC, RNP, VOR	111.30	012
19	ILS/LOC, RNP, VOR	110.30	192

## ILS Categories

Keflavík supports low visibility operations with multiple ILS-equipped runways. The available ILS categories are:

Runway	ILS Category
01	CAT I
28	CAT I
10	CAT II
19	CAT II

## Navigation Aids

Keflavík is equipped with several navigation aids used for arrivals, departures, oceanic transitions, and non-precision approaches.

Navaid	Type	Frequency	Usage
KFV	VOR/DME	112.80	Primary navigation aid for arrivals, departures and approach procedures

The KFV VOR/DME is located on the airfield and is widely used throughout published SIDs, STARs, approach procedures, and oceanic transition routing within Icelandic airspace.

Pilots should verify correct tuning and identification of the KFV VOR prior to conducting VOR-based procedures.

**KFV VOR/DME** Frequency: **112.80** Identifier: **KFV**

## Low Visibility Procedures (LVP)

LVPs are commonly used during winter operations due to fog, snow, strong winds, and rapidly changing weather conditions.

Pilots conducting CAT II approaches must ensure both aircraft and crew are certified and capable of CAT II operations prior to commencing the approach.

Visual approaches may be used during good weather conditions.

Strong crosswinds are common at Keflavík and pilots should be prepared for:

- Gusting winds
- Moderate turbulence
- Wind shear
- Rapid runway changes

Unless otherwise instructed, pilots should maintain approach speeds to ensure efficient sequencing.

# Direct Routings

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In Icelandic airspace, direct routings are extremely common.

Pilots should be prepared for:

- Directs to oceanic entry points
- STAR shortcuts
- Vectoring around weather systems

Keep the waypoint page and flight plan readily available for quick modifications.

# Communications

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You can always check online positions and sectors by visiting [VATSIM Radar](#)

Callsign	Description	Frequency
BIKF_ATIS	Keflavík ATIS	128.300
BIKF_DEL	Keflavík Delivery	121.000
BIKF_GND	Keflavík Ground	121.900
BIKF_TWR	Keflavík Tower	118.300
BIKF_APP	Keflavík Approach	119.300
BIRD_S1_CTR	Reykjavík Control	119.700

Additional frequencies and sector splits may be used during major events or periods of high traffic.

# Notes

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- Keflavík is a major North Atlantic ETOPS diversion airport.
- De-icing operations are frequent during winter months.
- Volcanic ash advisories may impact operations across Icelandic airspace.
- Strong winds and rapidly changing meteorological conditions are common year-round.
- Pilots should ensure adequate fuel planning for weather diversions and oceanic contingency procedures.



# BIRK - Reykjavík Airport

## Overview

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Reykjavík Airport (BIRK) is Iceland's primary domestic airport and serves as a major hub for regional operations across Iceland, Greenland, and the North Atlantic region. Located close to central Reykjavík, BIRK handles domestic scheduled services, air ambulance flights, Coast Guard operations, general aviation, business aviation, helicopter traffic, and occasional international regional flights.

The airport is operated in a highly dynamic environment with a mixture of turboprop, helicopter, training, and business aviation traffic. Due to its proximity to Reykjavík city and surrounding terrain/water, pilots should expect visual manoeuvring, rapidly changing weather conditions, and short-notice runway changes.

Weather conditions at Reykjavík can change rapidly throughout the day. Strong winds, low cloud, turbulence, snow showers, icing, and reduced visibility are common, particularly during winter operations.

## Use of Aprons

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Area	Assigned to
Apron 1	General Aviation
Apron 2	Coast Guard
Apron 3	General Aviation
Apron 4	Domestic / Scheduled Passenger
Apron 7	Icelandic Flight Academy

## IFR Clearance

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Initial contact is with Clearance Delivery, reporting:

- Callsign
- Stand number
- ATIS identification letter
- Destination

Example: “Reykjavík Delivery, ICE1DC stand 4, Dash 8 with information Charlie, request IFR clearance to Akureyri.”

Pilots unable to comply with published SIDs due to aircraft or navigation limitations should advise ATC immediately on first contact.

## Push-back

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Some terminal stands require pushback procedures due to apron layout constraints, although many domestic stands allow power-out departures.

ATC may issue:

- Straight-back push
- Tail east/west push
- Face north/south push instructions

Pilots should remain on stand until pushback clearance has been received from Ground.

## Taxi

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Taxi instructions normally include the full taxi route.

Pilots are expected to:

- Read back all hold short instructions
- Exercise caution during low visibility operations
- Monitor for helicopter and GA traffic

## Runways

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Reykjavík Airport operates three intersecting runways:

Runway	Length	Common Use
01/19	5,156 ft	Primary domestic operations
13/31	4,734 ft	Regional & crosswind operations

Runway selection depends heavily on:

- Wind conditions
- Traffic flow
- Crosswind limitations
- Weather conditions

## SIDs

Standard Instrument Departures from Reykjavík integrate into Icelandic domestic and regional airspace structures.

Initial climb altitudes are assigned by ATC and must not be exceeded unless cleared.

If unable to comply with RNAV procedures, advise ATC for radar vectors or alternative departure instructions.

## Arrival and STARs

Reykjavík arrivals frequently involve:

- RNAV arrivals
- Visual approaches
- Radar vectoring
- Short-notice runway changes

Do not descend unless explicitly cleared by ATC.

## Approach

Expect visual or RNAV approaches during normal operations depending on runway configuration and weather conditions.

Runway	Approach Types	Frequency	Course
01	RNP		007
19	ILS, LOC, RNP	109.90	187
13	LOC, RNP, NDB	109.10	128
31	RNP		308

Strong crosswinds are common at Reykjavík and pilots should be prepared for:

- Gusting winds
- Moderate turbulence
- Wind shear
- Rapid runway changes

## Navigation Aids

Reykjavík is equipped with navigation aids supporting domestic, regional, and instrument operations.

Navaid	Type	Frequency	Usage
RK	NDB	355	Primary navigation aid for arrivals and departures

### RK NDB

Frequency: **355**

Identifier: **RK**

## Low Visibility Procedures (LVP)

LVPs may be implemented during periods of reduced visibility, snowfall, or fog.

## Direct Routings

Direct routings are common within Icelandic domestic airspace.

Pilots should be prepared for:

- Directs to enroute fixes
- Shortened arrivals
- Vectoring around weather systems

## Communications

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You can always check online positions and sectors by visiting [VATSIM Radar](#)

Callsign	Description	Frequency
BIRK_ATIS	Reykjavík ATIS	128.100
BIRK_GND	Reykjavík Ground	121.700
BIRK_TWR	Reykjavík Tower	118.000
BIRK_APP	Reykjavík Approach	119.300
BIRD_S1_CTR	Reykjavík Control	119.700

Additional frequencies and sector splits may be used during major events or periods of high traffic.

## Notes

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- Reykjavík is Iceland's primary domestic airport.
- Helicopter traffic is frequent throughout the day.
- Rapid weather changes are common year-round.
- Visual manoeuvring is frequently required.
- Crosswind operations are common due to Icelandic weather patterns.

# BIAR - Akureyri Airport

## Overview

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Akureyri Airport (BIAR) is the main airport serving Akureyri and northern Iceland. The airport supports domestic scheduled flights, regional services, general aviation, air ambulance operations, training flights, and occasional international or charter traffic.

Akureyri is an important regional airport in Iceland, with traffic often operating to and from Reykjavík, Greenland, and smaller Icelandic communities. Due to its northern location and surrounding terrain, pilots should expect challenging weather, turbulence, icing conditions, and close attention to published procedures.

Weather conditions at Akureyri can change rapidly. Low cloud, snow showers, strong winds, reduced visibility, and winter contamination are common, particularly during the colder months.

## Use of stands

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Area	Stands	Assigned to
Main Apron - North & South	1-6	Domestic passenger operations
Remote / GA Apron	7-12	General aviation, business aviation & overflow parking
Helicopter / Special Operations	As assigned	Helicopter, ambulance and special operations

Regional turboprop aircraft commonly operate from the main apron, while general aviation, business aviation, and special operations may be positioned on remote or dedicated apron areas depending on traffic levels.

## IFR Clearance

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Initial contact is with Akureyri Tower, reporting:

- Callsign
- Stand number or parking position
- ATIS identification letter
- Destination

Example: “Akureyri Tower, ICE4AH stand 2, Dash 8 with information Alpha, request IFR clearance to Reykjavík.”

Pilots unable to comply with published SIDs due to aircraft or navigation limitations should advise ATC immediately on first contact.

## Push-back

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Most stands at Akureyri are suitable for power-out or self-manoeuvring operations, depending on aircraft type and traffic situation.

ATC may issue:

- Power-out approved
- Straight-back push
- Tail east/west push
- Face north/south push instructions

Pilots should remain on stand until pushback, taxi or power-out clearance has been received from ATC.

## Taxi

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Taxi instructions normally include the full taxi route. Pilots should use caution due to the compact apron layout and mixed traffic environment.

- Read back all hold short instructions
- Monitor for GA, ambulance and regional traffic
- Exercise caution in winter conditions

## Runways

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Akureyri Airport operates a single runway:

Runway	Length	Common Use
01/19	2,400 m / 7,874 ft	Primary arrival and departure runway

Runway selection depends heavily on:

- Wind conditions
- Visibility
- Traffic flow
- Runway condition
- Aircraft performance

## SIDs

Standard Instrument Departures from Akureyri integrate into Icelandic domestic and regional airspace.

Initial climb altitudes are assigned by ATC and must not be exceeded unless cleared.

Pilots should:

- Verify SID routing before taxi
- Ensure the filed route matches the expected departure routing
- Expect directs when traffic permits

If unable to comply with RNAV procedures, advise ATC for radar vectors or alternative departure instructions.

## Important Note When Departing

Akureyri IFR departures may be handed over shortly before or after departure depending on ATC coverage.

Example: "ICE4AH, when airborne contact Reykjavík Control on XXX.XXX, wind XXX degrees XX knots, runway XX, cleared for takeoff."

## Arrival and STARs

Akureyri arrivals may involve:

- RNAV arrivals
- VOR/NDB-based procedures
- Radar vectoring when available
- Visual approaches when conditions permit

Pilots should preload expected arrivals and approaches before descent where possible.

Do not descend unless explicitly cleared by ATC. Receiving an arrival or approach clearance does not automatically mean unrestricted descent unless the procedure and clearance allow it.

## Approach

Expect an instrument approach during poor weather, with visual approaches available when conditions permit.

Runway	Approach Types	Frequency	Course
01	ILS/LOC, RNP	108.90	008
19	RNP, VOR, NDB	110.50	183

## ILS Categories

Akureyri has an ILS/LOC approach available for runway 01.

Runway	ILS Category
01	CAT I

## Navigation Aids

Akureyri is supported by navigation aids used for arrivals, departures and instrument approach procedures.

Navaid	Type	Frequency	Usage
AKI	VOR/DME	113.60	Primary navigation aid for Akureyri procedures

The AKI VOR/DME is used for published arrivals, departures and non-precision approach procedures serving Akureyri.

Pilots should verify correct tuning and identification of the AKI VOR prior to conducting VOR-based procedures.

**AKI VOR/DME** Frequency: **113.60** Identifier: **AKI**

## Low Visibility Procedures (LVP)

Reduced visibility operations may occur during fog, snow, blowing snow, or low cloud. Pilots should ensure they are familiar with the published approach minima and runway condition reports.

Pilots conducting low visibility or winter operations should confirm runway condition, braking action, approach minima and aircraft capability before commencing the approach.

Visual approaches may be used during good weather conditions.

Strong crosswinds and challenging weather are common at Akureyri and pilots should be prepared for:

- Gusting winds
- Moderate turbulence
- Wind shear
- Rapid runway changes
- Winter contamination

## Direct Routings

Direct routings are common within Icelandic domestic airspace when traffic and ATC workload permit.

- Directs to enroute fixes
- Shortened arrivals
- Vectoring around weather systems

Keep the waypoint page and flight plan readily available for quick modifications.

# Communications

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You can always check online positions and sectors by visiting [VATSIM Radar](#).

Callsign	Description	Frequency
BIAR_ATIS	Akureyri ATIS	136.200
BIAR_TWR	Akureyri Tower	118.200
BIRD_S1_CTR	Reykjavík Control	119.700

Additional frequencies and sector splits may be used during major events or periods of high traffic.

## Notes

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- Akureyri is a key airport for northern Iceland domestic operations.
- Terrain and weather can make approaches challenging.
- Winter runway conditions should be carefully checked before departure and arrival.
- Regional turboprop and ambulance traffic are common.
- Pilots should be prepared for visual manoeuvring when weather permits.

# EKVG - Vágur Airport

## Overview

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Vágur Airport (EKVG) is the main airport serving the Faroe Islands. Located on the island of Vágur, the airport supports scheduled passenger flights, regional services, business aviation, helicopter operations, search and rescue activity, and occasional charter traffic.

Vágur is a challenging North Atlantic airport due to surrounding terrain, rapidly changing weather, sea winds, turbulence, and low cloud. Pilots should expect close attention to published procedures, approach minima, and runway conditions.

Weather conditions at Vágur can change quickly. Strong winds, low visibility, rain, fog, turbulence, wind shear, and rapidly lowering cloud bases are common throughout the year.

## Available Stands

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<https://stands.vatsim-scandinavia.org/?icao=EKVGframeless=true>

## Use of stands

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Area	Stands	Assigned to
Main Apron	1-5	Passenger operations
GA / Remote Apron	As assigned	General aviation, business aviation & overflow parking
Helicopter Area	As assigned	Helicopter, SAR and special operations

## IFR Clearance

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Vágar is normally operated as an AFIS / information service environment. Initial contact is with Vágur Information, reporting:

- Callsign
- Stand number or parking position
- ATIS / information received, if available
- Destination
- Requested clearance or intentions

Example: “Vágur Information, FLI55AW stand 2, Airbus A320 with information Alpha, request IFR clearance to Copenhagen.”

**Information Service:** Vágur operates as an AFIS / Information service. Pilots remain responsible for terrain clearance, runway separation, and sequencing unless otherwise coordinated. Expect advisory information rather than full ATC separation services.

## Push-back

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Most stands at Vágur may require pushback or careful manoeuvring due to the compact apron layout.

Vágur Information may issue:

- Straight-back push
- Face east/west push instructions
- Power-out approved where suitable

## Taxi

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Taxi instructions normally include the full taxi route. Pilots should use caution due to the compact apron, terrain, and possible strong wind conditions.

- Read back all hold short instructions
- Monitor for helicopter and regional traffic
- Exercise caution during strong wind or low visibility conditions
- Expect backtracking depending on traffic and runway in use

# Runways

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Vágar Airport operates a single runway:

Runway	Length	Common Use
12/30	1,799 m / 5,902 ft	Primary arrival and departure runway

Runway selection depends heavily on wind, visibility, traffic flow, runway condition and aircraft performance.

## SIDs

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Standard Instrument Departures from Vágur route aircraft safely away from surrounding terrain and into North Atlantic regional airspace.

Initial climb altitudes are assigned by ATC and must not be exceeded unless cleared.

If unable to comply with RNAV procedures, advise ATC for alternative departure instructions.

## Important Note When Departing

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Vágur departures are frequently handed over shortly after departure depending on ATC coverage and traffic levels.

**AFIS Operations:** Vágur operates as an Information / AFIS service rather than a fully controlled aerodrome. Pilots are responsible for ensuring runway separation and determining whether it is safe to depart based on the information provided.

Example: “FLI55AW, runway 30 is free, surface wind 310 degrees 18 knots, when airborne contact Reykjavík Control on XXX.XXX.”

Under AFIS procedures, Vágur Information will provide runway, traffic, weather and operational information, however formal takeoff clearances are not issued. Pilots should acknowledge the information and commence departure when safe to do so.

## Arrival and STARs

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Vágar arrivals may involve:

- RNAV arrivals
- Radar vectoring when available
- Visual approaches when conditions permit
- Short-notice runway changes due to wind

Do not descend unless explicitly cleared by ATC. Receiving an arrival or approach clearance does not automatically mean unrestricted descent unless the procedure and clearance allow it.

## Approach

Expect an instrument approach during poor weather, with visual approaches available when conditions permit.

Runway	Approach Types	Frequency	Course
12	LOC, RNP	109.10	109
30	ILS, RNP	110.30	302

## ILS Categories

Runway	ILS Category
30	CAT I

## Navigation Aids

Vágar is supported by navigation aids used for arrivals, departures and instrument approach procedures.

Navaid	Type	Frequency	Usage
VG	NDB	348	Non-precision approach and missed approach reference

Navaid	Type	Frequency	Usage
MY	NDB	337	Non-precision approach and missed approach reference

## Low Visibility Procedures (LVP)

Reduced visibility operations may occur during fog, rain, low cloud or poor weather. Pilots should ensure they are familiar with the published approach minima and runway condition reports.

Pilots conducting instrument approaches into Vágar should closely monitor terrain clearance and weather conditions due to the surrounding mountainous terrain and rapidly changing visibility.

## Direct Routings

Direct routings may be issued when traffic and workload permit.

- Directs to enroute fixes
- Shortened arrivals
- Vectoring around weather systems

## Communications

You can always check online positions and sectors by visiting [VATSIM Radar](#).

Callsign	Description	Frequency
EKVG_I_TWR	Vágar Information / AFIS	124.850
BIRD_S1_CTR	Reykjavík Control	119.700

When Vágar Information is online, pilots should treat the service as AFIS rather than full tower control. Expect traffic information, runway information, weather information and advisory instructions rather than full radar or tower control separation.

# Notes

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- Vágur is the main airport serving the Faroe Islands.
- Terrain, sea winds and rapidly changing weather make operations challenging.
- Low cloud, turbulence and wind shear are common.
- Helicopter and special operations traffic may be active.
- Pilots should review published procedures carefully before arrival or departure.

# A Quick Guide to Mach Numbers

One of the most common questions that VATSIM pilots ask when they fly in the BIRD CTA/OCA for the first time are 1. What is a Mach number, and 2. How/where do I find it?

This guide attempts to briefly address both questions, to the extent necessary for VATSIM purposes.

## What is a Mach number?

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A **Mach number**, or Mach speed, is your speed relative to the speed of sound (Mach 1 = the speed of sound itself.) For example, Mach 0.80 = 0.8 times, or 80%, of the speed of sound.

At cruise, and especially in oceanic airspace, ATC uses your speed in Mach to separate aircraft from each other by speed control. Therefore, when requesting oceanic clearance, it is generally required to provide your requested Mach number/Mach speed for the oceanic crossing.

For light aircraft flying too slow to changeover into Mach speed (<Mach 0.50), just let ATC know. ATC will issue you an oceanic clearance without a Mach number.

## How do I find my Mach number?

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There are several ways to check what your Mach number is. Generally, assuming you have generated your flight plan using Simbrief or a similar tool, the easiest is to check your **flight plan route**.

Whenever you enter oceanic airspace, your ATC flight plan's Route section (item 15 on an ICAO flight plan) should note your planned Mach number next to the **first oceanic waypoint of your route** — **OR at the start of your flight plan route**, if you are departing from an airport underlying oceanic airspace already (like those in Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands.)

This generally follows the format `MxxxFxxx`, where the three digits after M are the Mach number (a decimal point goes after the 1st digit), and the three digits after F are the planned flight level at that waypoint.

- E.g., `M078F350` means Mach 0.78 at FL350.

### Example 1: Departing an airport underlying the BIRD CTA



The screenshot shows a flight plan route entry in a software interface. The route is displayed as: `BIKF/01 M079F370 OSKU3A OSKUM DCT RATSU/N0453F370 DCT BARKU DCT ELBUS UL612 LAKEY DCT NUGRA NUGRA1H EGLL/27L`. A "Copy" button is visible to the right of the route text. A "Hide Details" button with an upward arrow is in the top right corner.



The screenshot shows a page from an ICAO flight plan document. The header reads "BA 80KA/03 NOV/KEF-LHR" and "Page 7". Below the header, it says "[ ATC Flight Plan ]" and "ICAO FLIGHT PLAN". The main body of the flight plan contains the following text: `FF BIRDZQZX EGPXZQZX EGTZQZX  
O30646 CYULSBFP  
(FPL-BAW80KA-IS  
-A21N/M-SDE3FGHIRWY/LB1  
-BIKF0720  
-M079F370 OSKUM3A OSKUM DCT RATSU/N0453F370 DCT BARKU DCT ELBUS  
UL612 LAKEY DCT NUGRA NUGRA1H  
-EGLLO218 EGCC  
-PBN/A1B1C1D101S1 DOF/231103 REG/GNEOZ EET/EGPX0054 EGTTO147  
SEL/ROTY CODE/407844 OPR/BAW PER/C RMK/TCAS)`

(The 1st screenshot is from Simbrief's Flight Briefing webpage; the 2nd is from the OFP/Operational Flight Plan PDF.)

In this example, the aircraft is departing from Keflavik int'l airport (BIKF) in Iceland. Therefore, the oceanic portion of your flight starts from essentially the very beginning of your route, and so your planned Mach number (and planned cruising level) is listed at the start of the flight plan route. In this case, it is **Mach 0.79** at **FL370**.

### Example 2: Passing through BIRD CTA enroute

## Route

Hide Details ^

```
CYVR/08R N0494F350 DCT SEATN DCT 52N120W 57N110W/N0489F370 60N100W 62N090W
63N080W 6330N07000W DCT KAGLY/M085F370 DCT EMBOK DCT 63N050W/M085F390
63N040W 62N030W 61N020W DCT BALIX/N0493F390 DCT NINEX DCT ROVLA UT256 DCS
UL612 LAKEY DCT NUGRA NUGR1H EGLL/27L
```

Copy



BA 84/03 NOV/YVR-LHR

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[ ATC Flight Plan ]

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ICAO FLIGHT PLAN  
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```
FF CZVRZQZX CZEGZQZX CZWZQZX CZULZQZX CZQXZQZX BGGLZQZX BIRDZQZX
EGGXZQZX EGPXZQZX EGTZQZX
030641 CYULSBFP
(FPL-BAW84-IS
-B78X/H-SDE1E2E3FGHIJ2J3J4J5M1RWXY/LB1D1
-CYVR0705
-N0494F350 DCT SEATN DCT 52N120W 57N110W/N0489F370 60N100W 62N090W
63N080W 6330N07000W DCT KAGLY/M085F370 DCT EMBOK DCT
63N050W/M085F390 63N040W 62N030W 61N020W DCT BALIX/N0493F390 DCT
NINEX DCT ROVLA UT256 DCS UL612 LAKEY DCT NUGRA NUGR1H
-EGLL0833 EGCC
-PBN/A1B1C1D1L101S2 DOF/231103 REG/GZBLA EET/CZEG0040 CZWG0303
CZEG0323 CZUL0333 CZQX0420 BGGLO444 63N050W0503 63N040W0535 CZQX0537
BIRD0551 62N030W0610 EGGX0644 EGPX0722 EGT0758 SEL/BPCG CODE/407898
OPR/BAW PER/D RMK/TCAS)
```

In this example, because the aircraft enters oceanic airspace starting at **KAGLY**, the oceanic Mach number & requested flight level are listed after that waypoint with a slash — `KAGLY/M085F370`, which means at KAGLY you are planning **Mach 0.85** at **FL370**.

There are also other ways to check your Mach number — for example, looking at your flight log (which should list your vertical and speed profile), or simply looking at your primary flight display/airspeed indicator if you are already airborne. The above is *one* simple way to check your planned Mach speed, but relying on this number is not a substitute for good planning and due diligence as a pilot.

Pilots are *strongly encouraged* to cross-check your Mach speed using multiple methods, to ensure you are reporting an accurate Mach speed to ATC.

# General Briefing

## Introduction

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*Illustration by Isavia.*

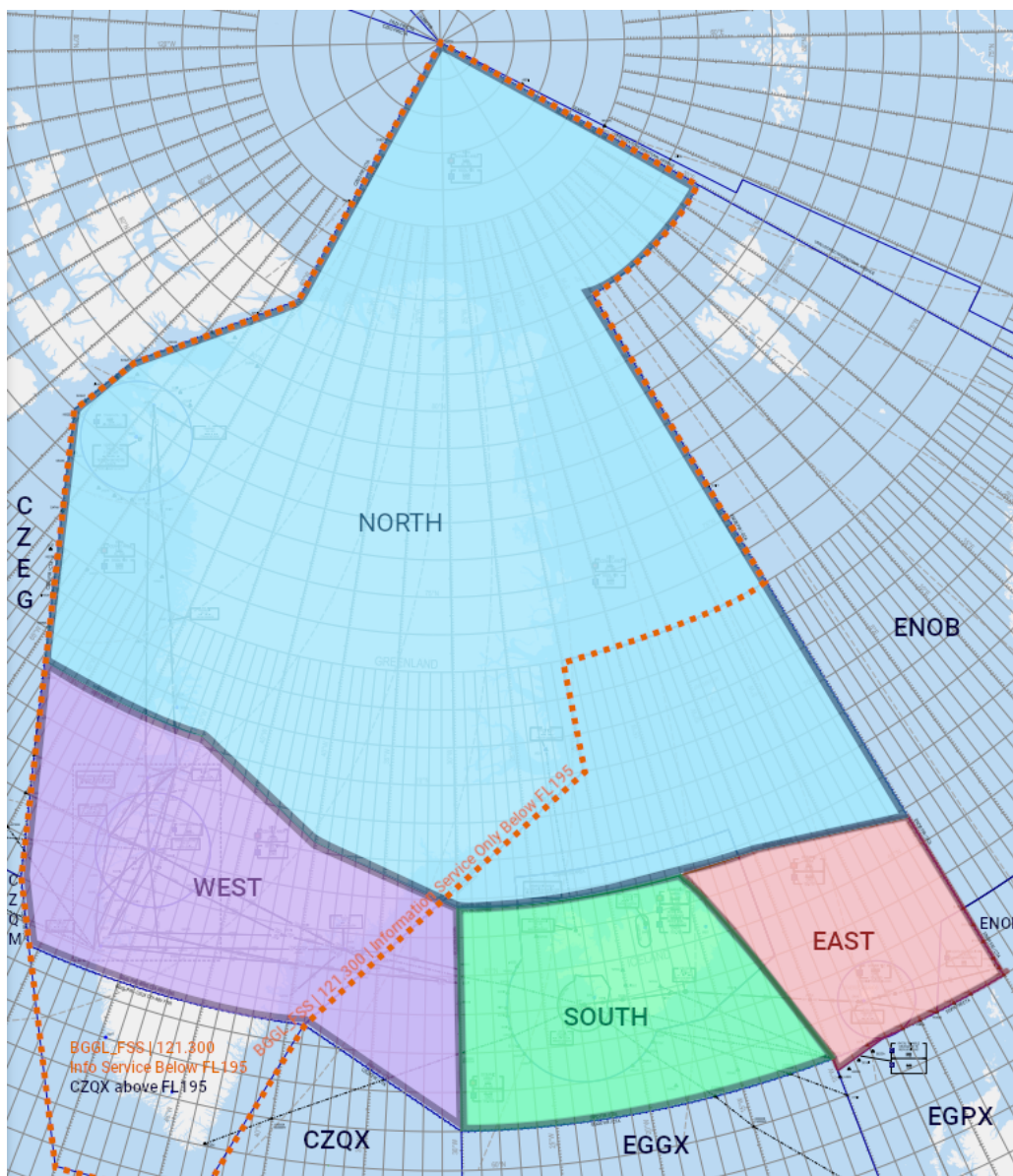
The **Reykjavik Control Area (BIRD CTA)** covers over 5.4 million square kilometres of oceanic airspace between North America and Europe, stretching all the way to the North Pole. Under this airspace lie three territories: Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe

Islands, each with unique geography, airports, and airspace. Together, they offer the VATSIM pilot limitless opportunities for flying.

Our closest neighbors are **Norway, Canada, and Scotland.** Neighboring FIRs and oceanic areas include Murmansk (ULMM), Bodo Oceanic (ENOB), Polaris (ENOR/ENSV), Scottish (EGPX/SCO), Shanwick (EGGX), Gander (domestic & oceanic; CZQX/CZQO), and Edmonton (CZEG.)

## Sectors

The BIRD CTA is split into four sectors: **North, South, East, and West.**



The most commonly staffed Reykjavik Control position is **BIRD\_S1\_CTR** (frequency 119.700.) This position, when online by itself, covers the **West, South, and East** sectors, and provides top-down coverage for **all of Iceland (BI\*\* airports), EKVG** (& surrounding airspace of the Faroe Islands), and **BGSF** (& surrounding airspace over parts of central Greenland.)

There are, of course, various other BIRD positions available to be opened, where multiple controllers split the various BIRD sectors between them. When multiple BIRD positions are open, you may check [vatglasses.uk](http://vatglasses.uk) to see which controller is controlling what airspace, or wait for a “contact me” message from the controller.

**NOTE:** Sometimes, during major events like Cross the Pond, the division of airspace between controllers may be changed from what it usually is, to accommodate the specific needs of that event. **This may cause Vatglasses to be inaccurate.** If you receive a “contact me” message from a BIRD controller, even if Vatglasses says you’re not in their airspace, **do what the controller says.**

The North sector is controlled exclusively by **Iceland Radio (BICC\_x\_FSS.)** Iceland Radio is a unique position on VATSIM that provides a variety of air traffic services, including:

- ATC in the North sector.
- IFR clearances for departures on the ground at Greenlandic uncontrolled airports (usually relayed by local AFIS, but if no local AFIS is online, then pilots may contact BICC directly.)
- (If *BGGL\_FSS/Nuuk Information is offline and workload permits*) Flight information service in Nuuk FIR below FL195, including top-down ATC at BGSF (Kangerlussuaq) if no local BGSF ATC is online.

If you are confused about when to talk to Iceland Radio, simply message the controller (we’re always happy to help, provided we’re not too busy!) or wait for a “contact me” message.

## Oceanic Airspace

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Much of the BIRD CTA — except some low-level airspace over Iceland and Greenland — is **oceanic airspace**, forming of the North Atlantic (NAT) oceanic area. The parts of the BIRD CTA which are oceanic airspace are known as the **Reykjavik Oceanic Area (BIRD OCA.)**

Even though the BIRD OCA is oceanic airspace, the *entirety* of the BIRD CTA/OCA has either radar or ADS-B coverage within controlled airspace. Therefore, **position reports are not required**, and pilots can expect to receive a typical ATS surveillance service similar to any domestic ATC position, including speed control, vectors, etc.

## NAT Tracks

The North Atlantic oceanic airspace uses a system of tracks called the **North Atlantic Organized Track System (NAT OTS,)** to regulate traffic crossing the ocean. While usually remaining in Shanwick & Gander OCAs, the tracks do occasionally enter the Reykjavik OCA.

If you want to learn more about how the NAT tracks work, read [this helpful guide](#) published by the Gander OCA on VATSIM. (Ignore the sections on the routes & Concorde tracks, as they are not relevant to the BIRD OCA.)

## Entering Oceanic Airspace

As of 19th March 2026 aircraft entering the Reykjavik ACC no longer require an RCL as per Nat Doc 007 Chapter 6 section 6.3.24

**All flights entering oceanic airspace must have an IFR clearance.** It is not permitted to fly VFR in oceanic airspace - you must either fly below controlled airspace (generally, below FL55 over the ocean, or below FL195 over Greenland), or obtain IFR clearance.

### If you are:

- Already airborne,
- Entering BIRD OCA, and
- Have not previously spoken to any other oceanic ATC (Gander, Shanwick, etc.)

## Voice Phraseology

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This is an example of communication between a pilot and the controller when entering the Reykjavik ACC

☞☞☞ Reykjavik Control, ICE123, FL380

☞ ICE123, Reykjavik Control, Identified

The controller then may ask you for your Mach number (This is potentially for forward planning and flow management)

☞ ICE123, Say Mach number

☞☞ ICE123, Mach decimal 78

☞ ICE123, roger, Maintain Mach decimal 78.

The controller may ask you to increase or decrease your Mach speed depending on traffic in the area or for flow management.

## Within Oceanic Airspace

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### Cost Index (ECON) Operations

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In oceanic airspace, you may now fly in Cost Index (ECON) mode for optimal fuel efficiency - you do not have to strictly adhere to a specific Mach number.

Note that controllers may still instruct you to fly a fixed Mach number if required for separation.

This procedure was previously known as "Operation Without Assigned Fixed Speed" (OWAFS) - the difference is that now (as of 20th March 2024), pilots are expected to fly ECON mode *by default*.

### Strategic Lateral Offset Procedures (SLOP)

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In BIRD OCA, **above FL285**, you may use [SLOP \(Strategic Lateral Offset Procedures\)](#). This is a random offset off your aircraft's track, intended to "artificially" induce a

navigation error that reduces the likelihood two aircraft will occupy the same airspace at once.

At pilot's discretion, aircraft with the capability to offset (using their FMS) may offset **right** of track, up to a maximum of **2 NM** (the exact offset you choose should be random.) ATC does not need to approve SLOP, or be informed when SLOP is in use. **Left offsets are prohibited.**

You must not apply SLOP below FL285 in the Reykjavik OCA, and must end the use of SLOP before entering domestic airspace.