

**f.** U.S. air traffic control towers do not routinely activate VFR flight plans. Foreign pilots especially must be mindful of the need to communicate directly with a flight service station, or use an assumed departure time procedure clearly communicated with the flight plan filing service.

**g.** Although position reports are not required for VFR flight plans, periodic reports to FSSs along the route are good practice. Such contacts permit significant information to be passed to the transiting aircraft and also serve to check the progress of the flight should it be necessary for any reason to locate the aircraft.

**h.** Pilots flying VFR should fly an appropriate cruising altitude for their direction of flight.

**i.** When filing a VFR Flight plan, indicate the appropriate aircraft equipment capability as prescribed for an IFR flight plan.

**REFERENCE-**

*AIM, Para 5-1-6, IFR Flights.*

**j.** ATC radar history data can be useful in finding a downed or missing aircraft; therefore, surveillance equipment should be listed in Item 18. Pilots using commercial GPS tracking services are encouraged to note the specific service in Item 19 N/ (survival equip remarks) of FAA Form 7233-4 or DD Form 1801.

## **5-1-6. Flight Plan – IFR Flights**

*(See Appendix 4, FAA Form 7233-4 – International Flight Plan)*

### **a. General**

**1.** Use of FAA Form 7233-4 or DD Form 1801 is mandatory for:

- (a)** Assignment of RNAV SIDs and STARs or other PBN routing,
- (b)** All civilian IFR flights that will depart U.S. domestic airspace, and
- (c)** Domestic IFR flights except military/DoD and civilians who file stereo route flight plans.
- (d)** All military/DoD IFR flights that will depart U.S. controlled airspace.

**2.** Military/DoD flights using FAA Form 7233-1, or DD Form 175, may not be eligible for assignment of RNAV SIDs or STARs. Military flights desiring assignment of these procedures should file using FAA Form 7233-4 or DD 1801, as described in this section.

**3.** When filing an IFR flight plan using FAA Form 7233-4 or DD Form 1801, it is recommended that filers include all operable navigation, communication, and surveillance equipment capabilities by adding appropriate equipment qualifiers as shown in Appendix 4, FAA Form 7233-4, International Flight Plan.

**4.** ATC issues clearances based on aircraft capabilities filed in Items 10 and 18 of FAA Form 7233-4 or DD 1801. Operators should file all capabilities for which the aircraft and crew is certified, capable, and authorized. PBN/capability must be filed in Item 18, Other Information. When filing a capability, ATC expects filers to use that capability; for example, answer a SATVOICE call from ATC if code M1 or M3 is filed in Item 10a.

**5.** Prior to departure from within, or prior to entering controlled airspace, a pilot must submit a complete flight plan and receive an air traffic clearance, if weather conditions are below VFR minimums. IFR flight plans may be submitted to an FSS or flight plan filing service.

**6.** Pilots should file IFR flight plans at least 30 minutes prior to estimated time of departure to preclude possible delay in receiving a departure clearance from ATC.

**7.** In order to provide FAA traffic management units' strategic route planning capabilities, nonscheduled operators conducting IFR operations above FL 230 are requested to voluntarily file IFR flight plans at least 4 hours prior to estimated time of departure (ETD).

**8.** To minimize your delay in entering Class B, Class C, Class D, and Class E surface areas at destination when IFR weather conditions exist or are forecast at that airport, an IFR flight plan should be filed before