

Airport	Identifier
Philadelphia Intl Airport	KPHL
Pittsburgh Intl Airport	KPIT
Raleigh–Durham Intl Airport	KRDU
Louisville Intl Airport	KSDF
Salt Lake City Intl Airport	KSLC
Lambert–St. Louis Intl Airport	KSTL
Tampa Intl Airport	KTPA
Tulsa Intl Airport	KTUL

7–1–25. PIREPs Relating to Volcanic Ash Activity

a. Volcanic eruptions which send ash into the upper atmosphere occur somewhere around the world several times each year. Flying into a volcanic ash cloud can be extremely dangerous. At least two B747s have lost all power in all four engines after such an encounter. Regardless of the type aircraft, some damage is almost certain to ensue after an encounter with a volcanic ash cloud. Additionally, studies have shown that volcanic eruptions are the only significant source of large quantities of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) gas at jet-cruising altitudes. Therefore, the detection and subsequent reporting of SO₂ is of significant importance. Although SO₂ is colorless, its presence in the atmosphere should be suspected when a sulphur-like or rotten egg odor is present throughout the cabin.

b. While some volcanoes in the U.S. are monitored, many in remote areas are not. These unmonitored volcanoes may erupt without prior warning to the aviation community. A pilot observing a volcanic eruption who has not had previous notification of it may be the only witness to the eruption. Pilots are strongly encouraged to transmit a PIREP regarding volcanic eruptions and any observed volcanic ash clouds or detection of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) gas associated with volcanic activity.

c. Pilots should submit PIREPs regarding volcanic activity using the Volcanic Activity Reporting (VAR) form as illustrated in Appendix 2. If a VAR form is not immediately available, relay enough information to identify the position and type of volcanic activity.

d. Pilots should verbally transmit the data required in items 1 through 8 of the VAR as soon as possible.

The data required in items 9 through 16 of the VAR should be relayed after landing if possible.

7–1–26. Thunderstorms

a. Turbulence, hail, rain, snow, lightning, sustained updrafts and downdrafts, icing conditions—all are present in thunderstorms. While there is some evidence that maximum turbulence exists at the middle level of a thunderstorm, recent studies show little variation of turbulence intensity with altitude.

b. There is no useful correlation between the external visual appearance of thunderstorms and the severity or amount of turbulence or hail within them. The visible thunderstorm cloud is only a portion of a turbulent system whose updrafts and downdrafts often extend far beyond the visible storm cloud. Severe turbulence can be expected up to 20 miles from severe thunderstorms. This distance decreases to about 10 miles in less severe storms.

c. Weather radar, airborne or ground based, will normally reflect the areas of moderate to heavy precipitation (radar does not detect turbulence). The frequency and severity of turbulence generally increases with the radar reflectivity which is closely associated with the areas of highest liquid water content of the storm. **NO FLIGHT PATH THROUGH AN AREA OF STRONG OR VERY STRONG RADAR ECHOES SEPARATED BY 20–30 MILES OR LESS MAY BE CONSIDERED FREE OF SEVERE TURBULENCE.**

d. Turbulence beneath a thunderstorm should not be minimized. This is especially true when the relative humidity is low in any layer between the surface and 15,000 feet. Then the lower altitudes may be characterized by strong out flowing winds and severe turbulence.

e. The probability of lightning strikes occurring to aircraft is greatest when operating at altitudes where temperatures are between minus 5 degrees Celsius and plus 5 degrees Celsius. Lightning can strike aircraft flying in the clear in the vicinity of a thunderstorm.

f. METAR reports do not include a descriptor for severe thunderstorms. However, by understanding severe thunderstorm criteria, i.e., 50 knot winds or 3/4 inch hail, the information is available in the report to know that one is occurring.