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February 2017 Direct-TO

FANS Datalink Update

CPDLC DCL Logon Display
By Derek Fiedler

There has been some confusion among operators regarding whether or not they are actually logged on to FANS at DCL airports in the U.S. The timing of the logon status message differs slightly in the U.S. compared to Oceanic Regions providing enroute FANS CPDLC, which may be the cause of the confusion.

In Oceanic areas, the ATC LOGON/STATUS page will display LOGON ACCEPTED momentarily, and then within seconds display ATC COMM ESTABLISHED in the scratchpad. Next, the active Center address displays under the ACT CTR field.

When performing a FANS logon with a Tower in the U.S., LOGON ACCEPTED will display and remain, as shown in the first example screen below. The CPDLC connection occurs only after the tower controller approves the CPDLC clearance, which happens at some point after P time-30 minutes (30 minutes prior to filed ETD). Once the controller transmits (pushes) the clearance to the aircraft, the LOGON ACCEPTED display will disappear and ATC COMM ESTABLISHED is displayed. The tower address will also display in the ACT CTR field, as shown in the second example screen below.


ATC Logon Examples (NZ FMS Shown)

Impact

Operators may think the FANS logon failed or the ATC LOGON/STATUS screen has "locked up" with only LOGON ACCEPTED displayed. As a result, multiple logon attempts are being made by crews while their aircraft is actually logged on. This causes an automatic disconnect by ATC and no other logon attempts will be accepted. The crew then has to revert to voice communication to obtain a clearance. Pilots should note that the timing for receiving an ATC COMM ESTABLISHED message is entirely dependant on when the controller pushes the clearance to the aircraft. This will be within P Time -30 minutes.

Recommendation

If within P time -30 minutes and getting close to actual departure time with no DCL received, contact the tower to see if they show you logged on. If attempting another logon, first turn off ATC COMM to ensure there is no conflict with ATC automation. Go to page 2 of the ATC LOGON/STATUS screen and select ATC COMM to OFF, as shown in the first example screen below. If the logon was active, ATC COMM TERMINATED will display as shown in the second example screen below.

Next, re-select ATC COMM back to ARM. Verify logon information is correct, then only one additional logon attempt should be made. If the second logon attempt fails, or the DCL is not received, the crew should revert to voice for clearance delivery.
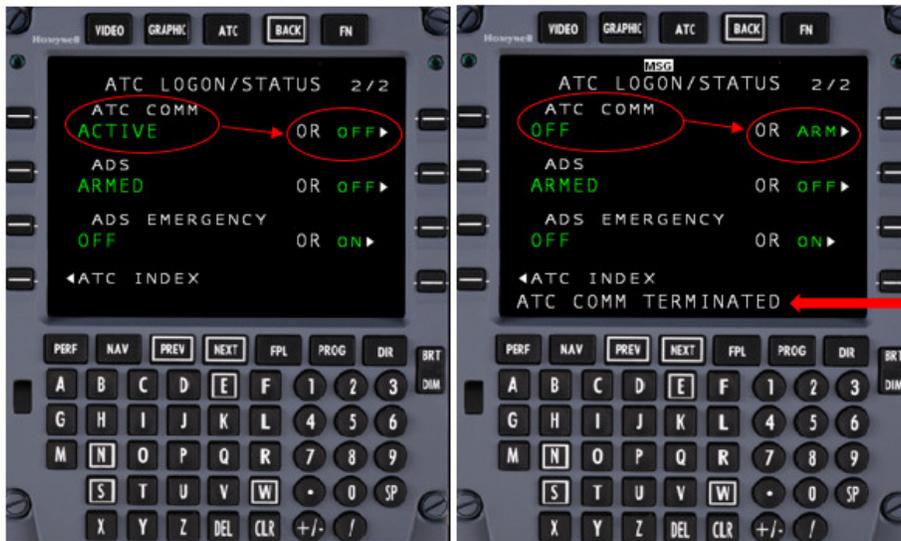
Attempting a Second Logon (NZ FMS Shown)

CPDLC DCL FANS Logon Restriction

A FANS logon is being temporarily restricted to no earlier than 1 hour prior to filed departure time. Normally a FANS logon may be completed at any time during pre-flight operations, but a limitation has been implemented due to an ATC automation issue within the U.S. Logging on earlier than P-1 hour will cause the logon to expire prior to the clearance being issued.

Recommendation

Logon to FANS at P-1 hour. After P-30 minutes ATC will automatically push the clearance to the aircraft. This restriction applies to all aircraft types and platforms.

Please contact Honeywell Flight Technical Services (mailto:FTS@Honeywell.com) with any CPDLC questions or operational issues.

Derek Fiedler supports Datalink, CPDLC, and the Global Data Center for Honeywell Flight Technical Services. He can be reached via email at Derek.Fiedler@Honeywell.com (mailto:Derek.Fiedler@Honeywell.com).

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