

Preferred Routes

There are two types of preferred routes - general preferred routes developed for select city pairs in the US and those developed for use in Southern California which are known as SOCAL routes. All preferred routes are Center defined routing between airport pairs.

First, let's look at the general preferred routes. In addition to a defined route of nav aids and airways, they may have limitations and or criteria such as turbo prop, jet, time, altitude, etc. They may be published in the Airport Facility Directory, but be aware that each Center has hundreds that are not published and also not contained in the National Flight Database. Those unpublished routes are more likely to be the newest and most frequently used, and since they are not included in the FAA's National Airspace Database, DUATS will not have them. In most cases, preferred routes follow normal rules and have standard route elements for the pilot to enter as the route of flight. However, there are some with FIX RADIALs (FR) - for example RDU320. Sometimes these FRs are followed by a FIX or NAVAID and sometimes the next element is simply an existing airway. Sometimes the route starts with an airway.

How to find a preferred route:

- WebDUATS offers a selection in the Flight Plan Form after departure and destination have been entered.
- Golden Eagle FlightPrep offers a preferred route form to retrieve preferred routes.
- You can always enter the airport pair with no preceding Ks and no spaces (i.e. IADJFK) in the Decode/Extended Decode functions offered in all DUATS services.

Using the preferred route

Most preferred routes can be used to File a flight plan, create a flight log using the user defined route input to a

flight planner, and obtain Weather Briefings. These include routes that contain a FR and a NAVAID or FIX as the next element. In all cases the route must be entered by typing or cutting and pasting into the route field of the flight plan, flight planner, or weather briefing form. However, there are some exceptions which require further editing of the route:

- 1 Preferred routes that contain a FIX/RADIAL to an airway or routes that jump directly to an airway can't be used for flight plan filing or to obtain weather briefings unless the pilot does some adapting to the route.
- 2 If the FR is published with an R at the end of the FR, for example RDU320R, you must delete the R.
- 3 The route must use appropriate transitions for Jet routes. If it does not, you must enter them manually.
- 4 The flight planner can't process any routes with a FIX/RADIAL or that jump directly to an airway. You must adapt them manually.

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Please note that routes which have been adapted manually in cases 1 through 4 above, the preferred route may not be recognized as a preferred route by the center when you file your flight plan. We are working on a possible solution that will allow all preferred routes to be accepted as displayed for briefing, filing and flight planner use.

SOCAL (also called Tower-to-Tower Routes)

Lets look at the second type of preferred route known as SOCALs. These are preferred routes published by LA Center for use in LA Center Airspace. These routes all have a four or five character name identifying airport pairs and allowing for the route to simply be filed using the short name. For example, when requesting preferred routing through DUATS, the airport pair Bob Hope (BUR) and Hawthorn Municipal (HHR) would return:

BURHHR route id BURM1 route V186 V394
HHR RY25 LOC

BURHHR route id BURM2 route TWINE V518
V459 SLI

BURHHR route id BURM3 route VNY095R
ELMOO (WHEN LAX ON EAST OPERATION)

The short name for example BURM1 would be entered in the flight plan and the route associated with BURM1 is what is actually flown.

All SOCAL routes can be used for filing and weather briefings by entering the short name, such as BURM1. For Flight Planner use, the route must be typed or copied and all of the rules described for the general preferred routes apply to SOCALs.

Make it easy on yourself

By using the DUATS flight planner auto routing functions, you will avoid problems associated with flight plans being accepted by Center Host Computer. You will also get the benefits of having wind information specific to each route segment applied to the flight plan making the time/fuel more accurate. The ETE when using direct flights that have only departure and destination are not as accurate because of the way the planner averages the wind. Direct flight plans broken into segments as with the GPS/LORAN or RNAV options produce much more accurate ETEs. If the you prefer fewer waypoints in the route of flight, you may delete all unwanted waypoints from the flight plan prior to filing.

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