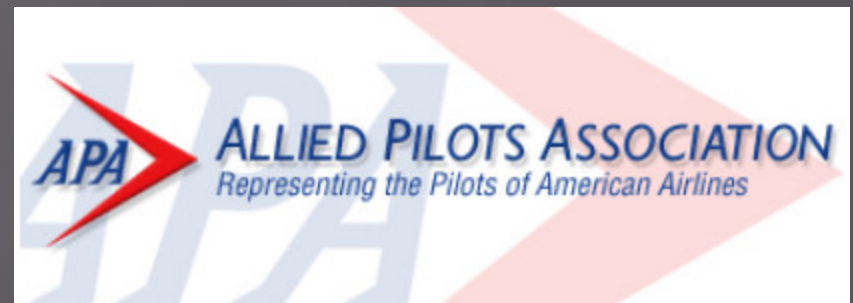


VOLCANIC ASH AND THE PART 121 PILOT

Captain Tim Miner
Allied Pilots Association
National Safety Committee



Outline

- ▣ What is the guidance given to pilots at American Airlines regarding volcanic ash.
- ▣ What is the preflight information given to pilots prior to their departure.

Guidance on Volcanic Ash

- ▣ “Flight in areas of known volcanic activity must be avoided unless specific procedures are in place for monitoring and communication.”
- ▣ ...all SIGMECs and WSI flight plan guidance charts must be reviewed for current status of volcanic activity... (controlling information)
- ▣ ...without internet a review of (text) SIGMECs in DECS (flight plan computer system) is sufficient...

Guidance

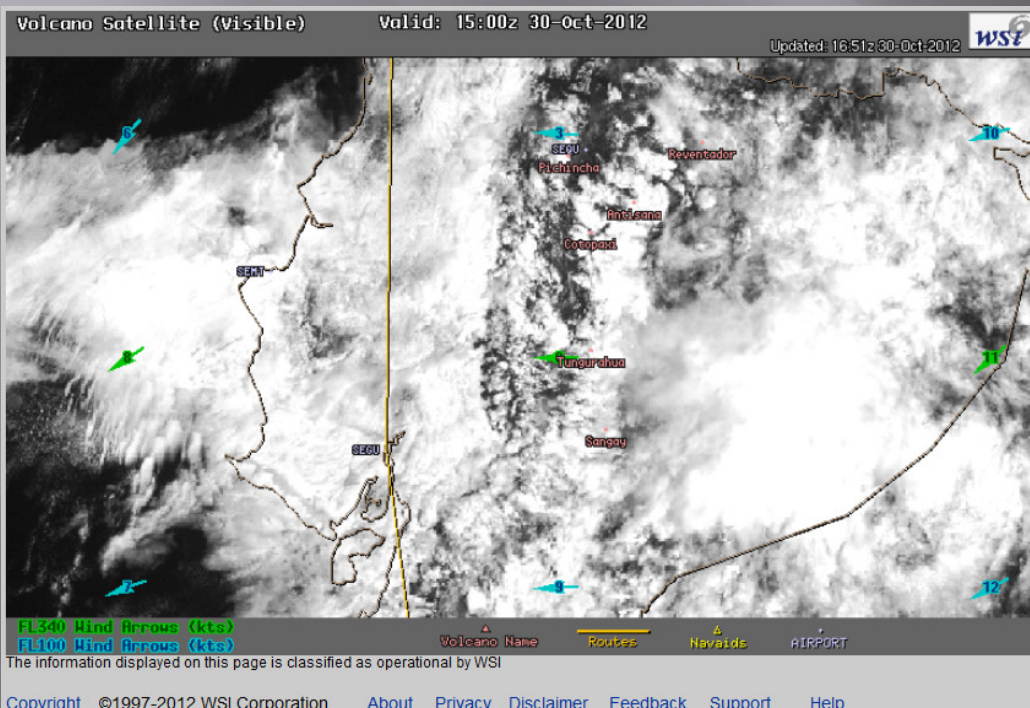
- ▣ “If volcanic ash is reported enroute, the planned flight should remain at least 60 nm clear of the area, and if possible, stay on the upwind side...”
- ▣ “If volcanic ash is encountered exit as quickly as possible...” (180 degree turn)

Guidance

- ▣ “Flights shall not be planned or operated to / from an airport when due to volcanic ash, one of the following applies to that airport:”
- ▣ ...it is within closed airspace
- ▣ ...it is closed by local authorities
- ▣ ...has volcanic ash reported in the body (not remarks) of the METAR
- ▣ ...it is within or forecast to be within a SIGMEC issued by WSI where ash exists or is forecasted to the surface

Preflight information

- ▣ Textual guidance provided by WSI warning areas specific for American Airlines operations.
- ▣ Static visible images (non scaling)



October 30, 2012 picture of “volcanic area number 5” in South America

Pink dot represents location of a volcano (not necessarily erupting at the time)

At this time ONE volcano here was ...?

Conclusions

- ▣ Given the lack of information and our dependence upon the dispatcher, all AA pilots will err on the side of caution, especially during night or IMC operations.
- ▣ Keeping away from known plumes by 60 nm and in terminal areas is a must.
- ▣ “ALWAYS FLY AGGRESSIVELY SAFE!”