



e-AWB Resolution Amendment

Frequently Asked Questions

November 2018

1. Does the resolution amendment mean that electronic air waybill (e-AWB) will become mandatory from 1 January 2019?

No, it means that from 2019 the normal practice should be e-AWB. Paper documents are still usable, but should be considered nonstandard.

The decision taken by the Cargo Services Conference is a very important step: it recognizes that “e-AWB” reflects the majority of shipments on enabled trade lanes. The old IATA rules stated that paper AWBs was required and electronic was optional (i.e. subject to agreement by the business partners).

From 1 January 2019, the rules will dictate that electronic AWBs are the standard method on enabled trade lanes and that paper AWBs are optional (i.e. subject to agreement by the business partners).

2. Why did IATA take this decision now?

When the air cargo industry raised this initiative at the end of 2017, more than 50% of the shipments were using the e-AWB as their digital shipment record. Over the past three years, the number of e-AWB almost doubled (+100%) while the total number of AWBs increased by 20%. The growing number of stakeholders using the electronic document demonstrated that the industry is ready to embrace full digitalization.

IATA considered that this was the right momentum to capitalize on the increase of e-AWB adoption. Current e-AWB adoption level is published on our [monthly report](#).

3. Will this change have an impact on how we do e-AWB?

No, in terms of implementation, the change does not affect the current e-AWB processes or standards.

4. Will the Multilateral Agreement (MeA) be required from 1 January 2019?

Yes, the MeA (or at least a bilateral agreement) will be necessary. We need an agreement process to comply with the international conventions requiring to have the consent of the shipper, among other reasons.

5. Under what circumstances will the paper AWB be preferred over e-AWB?

Paper AWB may still be required due to applicable international treaties, national law, or as bilaterally agreed between the parties.

6. What will happen with those enabled trade lanes where customs administrations still require the submission of a paper AWB?

Airline members are strongly recommended to comply with any authorities' requirements. Therefore, they should be able to provide a paper AWB to any authority that asks for it. To help e-AWB adoption in such cases, IATA developed the [Single Process](#) concept.

7. Should airlines provide a list of destinations that require paper copies of AWB to Freight Forwarders customers?

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8. What is Single Process?

To help the adoption of e-AWB adoption IATA developed the [Single Process](#) concept.

9. Where can we find information on airlines capable of handling e-AWB?

Information can be found on the [IATA Matchmaker](#).

10. What are “enabled trade lanes”, and what proportion of cargo is now shipped on enabled trade lanes?

Around 70% of the total shipments by air are transported on feasible/enabled trade lane. A “feasible/enabled trade lane” is defined as such when the country of origin and the country of destination ratified the same treaty - either the Montreal Protocol No. 4 of 1975 (MP4) or the Montreal Convention of 1999 (MC99).

11. What does a freight forwarder need to get on board the e-AWB program

IATA published the [e-AWB Implementation Playbook](#) to support the adoption of e-AWB by airlines and forwarders, presenting the different steps to achieve a successful e-AWB implementation.

12. What type of technology can a freight forwarder use to transmit the required EDI data to an airline?

Please refer to the [e-AWB Implementation Playbook](#).

13. Is there any penalty for using paper on lanes where e-AWBs are enabled?

It is up to each individual airline to define their product and commercial policy. IATA is not involved in such decisions.

14. Can the airlines mandate freight forwarders to shift into e-AWB? Are there any exceptions?

It is up to each individual airline to define their product and commercial policy, including the commercial relationship with their customer and the applicable exceptions.

15. Did you receive any input or reaction from freight forwarders?

The resolution amendment was submitted to FIATA and the IFCC prior to adoption by the CSC and the two bodies supported the initiative.

You can find more information about industry support on an [article in our Cargo Tracker newsletter](#). The feature includes comments from two forwarders, DB Schenker and Kuehne+Nagel.

16. Is there a guaranteed ease of transaction (e.g. fast lane) for freight forwarders that are registered as e-AWB customers?

It is up to each individual airline to define their product and commercial policy.

17. What would happen if the airline is not capable of handling e-AWB?

If the airline is not capable of handling e-AWB, the paper process will be used.