



# Justified Non-Utilization of Slots

## Planning for the unexpected



### Introduction

Despite an airline's best intentions to fly, external factors disrupt flights causing delay and cancellations. This triggers aircraft and crew to become limited and out of sequence to operate other planned flights. Revenue is lost, additional cost borne in managing the impact to passengers, and rights to future equivalent airport slots are placed at risk.

Justified Non-Utilization of Slots (JNUS) policy eliminates the risk to future equivalent airport slots. This applies when the circumstances that led to delay or cancellation were unforeseeable, or unavoidable. Without a fair application of JNUS policy, airlines are at risk of being penalized unfairly for circumstances that are outside of their control.



### JNUS and the WASG

JNUS is a principal of the [Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines](#) (WASG part 8.8) and is recognized by most regulatory authorities worldwide. As with other WASG principals, the harmonized application of JNUS is essential to aid smooth and efficient airline planning. This translates into schedule, planning resilience, and consumer flight certainty.



### JNUS and the 80:20

Airlines are required to operate 80% of a series of slots. Failing to do so means the airline loses the rights to fly the same slots in the next equivalent season. In reality, airlines operate closer to 100% of a series of slots, but remaining flexibility quickly disappears where appropriate JNUS eligibility is missing. JNUS eligibility means affected slots are counted as used.



### Procedure

Airlines should contact the coordinator as soon as possible after a flight is cancelled or is not operated due to reasons that are unforeseeable, unavoidable, or fall outside of an airline's control, to confirm that such flights will be treated as operated.

The coordinator and airline should agree what JNUS eligibility applies and escalate the situation to the coordination committee for guidance if required.

Delays to confirming JNUS eligibility should be avoided to prevent airline planning uncertainty.



### Unforeseeable events

Abnormal deviations from the standard operating day that an airline cannot be reasonably expected to plan for, and which an airline did not have actionable knowledge of in a timely manner during the planning process.

An event is not foreseeable until there are capacity impact assessments that airlines can use to inform decisions that impact their network.

For example, a notification of airspace closure one year in advance of operation would still not qualify as foreseeable if precise dates and times are not given, as without this information, it is impossible for the airline to make alternative plans.



### Unavoidable events

Events which are unavoidable and where there is no reasonable alternative solution for an airline to operate as planned.

When deciding whether a circumstance is unavoidable, the practical alternatives to operate should be considered. Alternatives for operating the slot should not be overly cost burdensome, should avoid increased network/passenger disruption, and must maintain the airline's ability to deliver the broader planned airline operation.



### JNUS eligible events

Natural disasters, pandemics, airspace closures, industry staffing, extensive delivery delays and supply chain issues are but a small number of the possible disruptions to the aviation ecosystem which cannot be controlled by airlines. IATA provides an illustrative listing of [JNUS eligibility](#). Other events may also be eligible.



### Ex-Ante eligibility

If a qualifying event is known in advance of operation, JNUS should be granted ex-ante to carriers who wish to mitigate impacts to passengers, cargo, and their operations by cancelling in advance of an event.

Examples of ex-ante events:

- COVID-19 pandemic
- Engine or aircraft manufacturing defects
- War and airspace restrictions
- Planned strike action

Should ex-ante events subsequently not materialize, JNUS eligibility must remain.



### JNUS longevity

JNUS should be granted ex-post for a defined recovery period to support demand re-establishment and necessary service provisions in order to operate.

IATA is cognizant that JNUS cannot last forever. Inevitably an operational restriction that was not known in one season, will become known and may be planned for per the above definitions. When deciding the applicability of a time period to grant JNUS, if demand for the route has been negatively impacted as a result of the event in question, coordinators should apply a commensurate period of recovery to fully utilize the slot.

For periods of prolonged disruption, a recovery period of up to 6 weeks should be applied following the cessation of any relevant restrictions.



### Coordination Committee

No single party should be responsible for deciding what constitutes an event that is unforeseeable, unavoidable, or falls outside of an airline's control. Unforeseeable and unavoidable events that fall outside of an airline's control should be identified through coordinator-airline dialogue.

Where agreement cannot be found, the airport Coordination Committee (or equivalent body) should be requested to provide guidance.

### Additional JNUS guidance

When calculating the 80% usage of a series of slots, slots not used will be considered as operated if the non-utilization is justified for any of the following reasons:

1. Interruption of the air services of the airline due to unforeseeable or unavoidable causes outside the airline's reasonable control, for example prevention or caution against use of airport facilities or enroute airspace, severe weather or grounding of the aircraft type generally used; or
2. Action intended to affect these services that prevents the airline from carrying out operations as planned – for example, industrial action or strikes.
3. Operational events (within 24 hours of operation) that prevent an airline from operating as intended, for example incidents, accidents, or unforeseeable maintenance issues.
4. Extraordinary market disruption that would result in unsustainable airport or airline operations, for example a pandemic restricting operational feasibility.
5. Government advisories against all but essential travel.
6. Justified non-utilization of slots is confirmed at the other end of the route.



**Contact IATA for more information:**  
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