

# **Assisted Flight Plan Exchange (AFPEX) Start Guide**

# Introduction

Welcome to the AFTN Flight Plan Exchange (AFPEX) Quick Start Guide. This guide should only be used as a 'quick reference' and has been designed to assist you in the basic functions of the AFPEX application. A fully comprehensive Operators Manual is accessible within your Mailbox under the **Help** menu. This guide describes the initial login process, password/passphrase changes, message reception, creation and transmission.

The system has a number of functions available to assist the user in the compilation of messages. It indicates the mandatory fields that are to be completed and checks each message for accuracy and format before allowing it to be sent into the AFTN network.

A 24 hour Helpdesk is available to all users and contact information is provided at the back of this guide.

## Minimum System Requirements

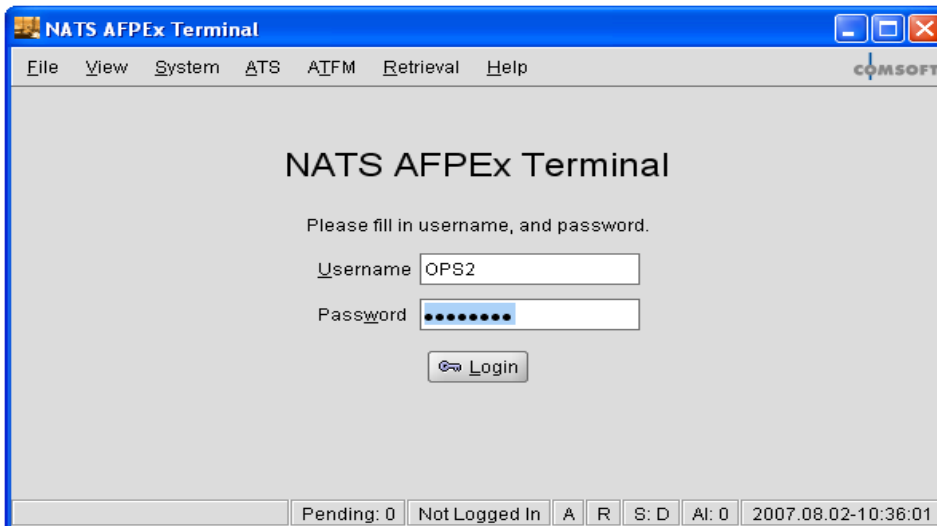
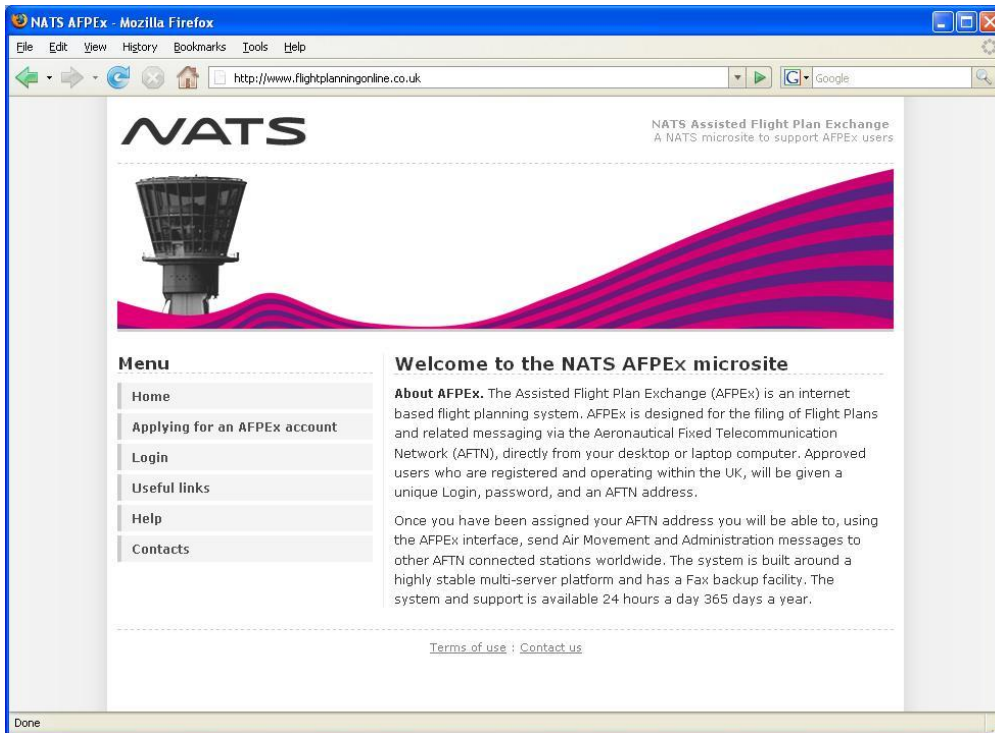
The following are the minimum system requirements that should be installed on your PC to enable access to the AFPEX Application:

- 500MHz P4 processor (CPU) or equivalent
- 512MB system memory (RAM)
- 56Kb/s network access to the internet
- Graphics card capable of 1024x768 resolution
- Java SE version 6 software installed

Note: You may need to ensure that the Java WebStart application (part of Java SE 6) is enabled as part of your local security policy. Please note that some Apple operating systems do not currently support Java SE 6.

# Logging on

**Logging on:** Open your web browser (e.g. Internet Explorer) and enter the AFPEX home page address [www.flightplanningonline.co.uk](http://www.flightplanningonline.co.uk) in your command line and press the return key. Select **'Login'**. (AFPEX loadshares, so please only bookmark the above address).



Enter your **Username** and your **Password**, and Select a **Passphrase** (if required) and click Login. The Passphrase should contain 7 letters and can include numbers and a mixture of Upper and lower case characters. It may not consist of a simple character sequence or be the same as your password. Choose from the drop-down list. Future logins will only request 3 characters from this Passphrase and these must be selected from the dropdown menu within the time-out period.

Accept the AFPEX terms and conditions of use as failure to do so will result in access to the AFPEX application being refused.

Check the '**Accept**' box and click '**Login**'.

## Changing Initial Password


After initial logon to AFPEX, for security purposes your password must be changed. The following is a list of limitations that your new password must adhere to:

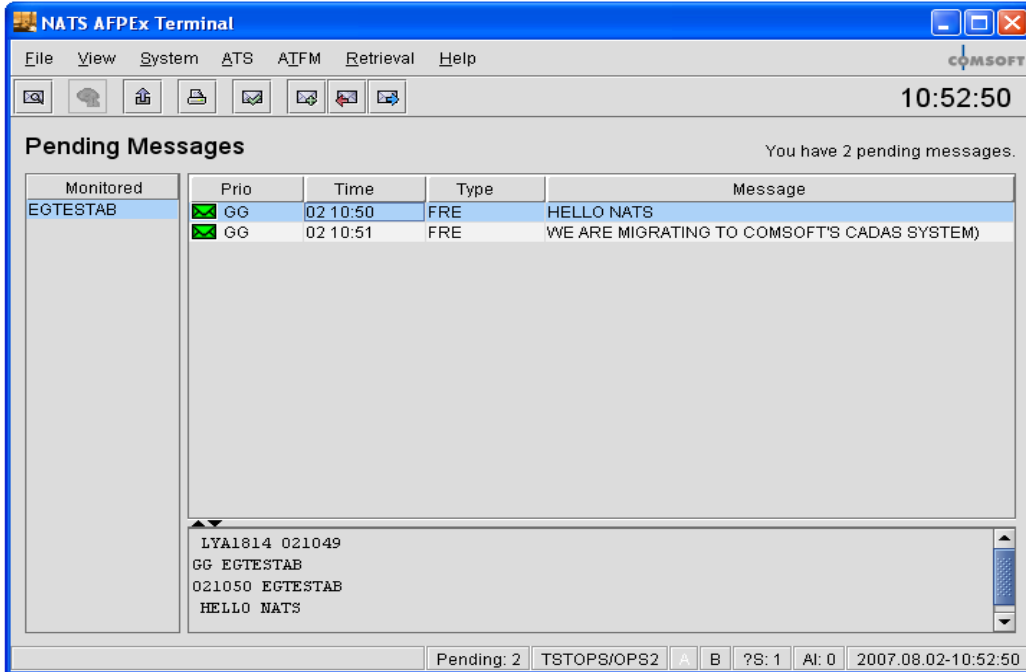
- It must be at least 8 characters in length
- It must include at least one uppercase letter, one lowercase letter and one number
- It cannot contain a word that appears in the English dictionary that is four letters or greater

### **To change your password:**

- Click **System** on the toolbar then select **Change Password** from the dropdown list
- Input your 'Old Password' - the one supplied on your email for initial login
- Input your new password and repeat as appropriate. A dialogue box will appear if your new password has not been accepted by the system detailing the error.

# Pending Messages

Once logged on, your pending message screen will be displayed (click **View** from the toolbar and select **Pending Messages** from the dropdown if you exit this screen). This screen displays all unacknowledged messages that have been received by your mailbox. Each message can be opened by double clicking on it or highlighting it, then clicking on the icon at the top left of the screen (  )



# Acknowledging Messages

All messages must be 'Acknowledged' once actioned. They are stored in your 'Message Folders' (Click **View** on the toolbar and select **Message Folders** from the dropdown). All inbound and outbound messages will be kept here for a period of 30 days, after which they will automatically be discarded by the system.

**To acknowledge a message:** Highlight the required message(s) then click the icon at the top of the screen depicted by a green tick and envelope.

# Creating an FPL Message

To create a new FPL, select **ATS** from the toolbar, then **FPL** from the drop down list. An empty FPL form will then be presented.

The screenshot shows the 'Send - FPL - ICAO Flight Plan' window in the NATS system. The form is divided into several sections:

- Missing equipment:** A red 'X' icon is present.
- Prio. Addressees:** Priority is set to 'FF' and the addressee is 'LFABZPZX'.
- Filing Time Originator Bell:** Filing time is empty, originator is 'EGLLZPZX', and bell is 'Extra Addr.'. There are checkboxes for 'Address To IFPS', 'Full Addressees List', and 'Extended Header'.
- 7/Aircraft ID:** 'TEST7'.
- 8/Flight Rules:** 'I'.
- 9/Number:** Empty.
- 10/Equipment:** Empty, with a red 'X' icon.
- 13/Departure:** 'ZZZZ', Time '1134'.
- 15/Speed:** 'N0240', Altitude/Level 'F190'.
- Route:** 'DCT HASTINGS DCT'.
- 16/Destination:** 'LFAB', Total EET '0632', Alternate empty, 2nd empty.
- 18/Other:** 'DEP/SCADGHILL D0F/071210'.
- 19/Endurance:** '0900', Person on Board 'TBN', Emergency Radio 'U V E'.
- Survival Equipment:** 'S P D M J' (Polar, Desert, Maritime, Jungle).
- Dinghies:** 'D', Number empty (with red 'X'), Capacity empty (with red 'X'), Cover 'C', Colour empty (with red 'X').
- Colour and Markings:** Empty (with red 'X').
- Remark:** 'N' (with red 'X').
- Pilot:** 'J SMITH'.
- Filed By:** 'HEATHROW\_FBU', Group 'HEATHROW', User 'HEATHROW\_FBU'.

A red note at the bottom right states: 'Item 19 information is not part of message body'.

Fill out the form as required, making use of the online assistance. All mandatory fields are highlighted with a red [X]. Hovering over or right-clicking text boxes provides assistance/advice to what should be entered. If invalid data is entered then the red [X] will remain until valid data is entered.

**NOTE:** AFTN regulations state that the maximum message text length (excluding message addressing) must be no more than 1800 characters in length. The AFPEX application is currently being changed to stop messages exceeding this being produced by default. However, as an interim measure, if a message you are producing exceeds 1800 characters in the message text, then it must be split into separate messages no larger than 1800 textual characters in size. If this is not done, the message will reject at the AFTN message switch resulting in a Service message being sent back to the originator. The service message will state that the message is over sized and should be re-submitted in the correct format.

Please note, that the FPL Form defaults to settings for an IFR flight. Remember to select the correct Flight rules in item 8. The addressing assistance provided is dependant on the correct flight rules being selected.

## Message Addressing

### FPL Messages

As soon as you open up the FPL message template, AFPEX automatically enters your default originator address into the Originator field and fills the Departure field with your default aerodrome designator (this will be set up by CACC NATS depending on the details you have given on your initial application form).

Depending on the type of flight rule entered, the system will automatically enter some mandated AFTN addresses. If the type of flight selected is Instrument Flight Rules ('I' in field 8) then the IFPS addresses are automatically entered into the Address line.

If Visual Flight Rules ('V' in field 8) is selected, the system will enter the appropriate VFR AFTN addresses for the departure, destination, first alternate airfields etc that have been entered in fields 13 and 16. The operator **must add** all further addresses with regards to the FIR boundaries being entered or crossed. AFPEX has simplified this addressing for VFR flight planning purposes by creating a set of Collective Addresses exclusively for AFPEX Users. Using the method described below simply select the Departure country, any country overflown and destination country. Also check the Departure destination and alternate Airfields on the dropdown list for any further domestic requirements. This is achieved by:

- Right clicking on a blank addressee field on the FPL template
- Select VFR Addressing
- Select every region that the flight will be passing through.

**Please Note: Please ensure the London and Scottish FIRs are not overlooked. They require to be notified of the flight if your flight passes through the Scottish or London FIRS. This list also includes other domestic addresses that may be required, for example, flights to Blackbushe should also be addressed to Farnborough. By selecting Blackbushe from the dropdown list Farnborough AFTN address will be added to the address line of the flight plan.**

'Y' and 'Z' flight rules allow the user to select a mixture of both the required IFR and VFR AFTN addresses for mixed flight rules. The system will add the addresses in a combination of the 'I' and 'V' options as described earlier. It is the pilot's responsibility to insure that any FPL message is addressed correctly and you can manually add/delete the AFTN addresses as required.

### **ATFM Messages**

When preparing ATFM messages, the AFPEX system will automatically enter the IFPS ATFM AFTN addresses into the first field and the user can add/remove as required.

For both FPL and ATFM the form defaults to display 7 boxes for entering AFTN addresses. Should it be necessary to add more addresses, check the box 'Full Address List' and an additional 14 boxes will appear (Total 21). 21 AFTN addresses is the maximum number allowed on each message transmission.

If, for example, the flight rules on an FPL need to be changed and the system attempts to add in excess of 21 addresses automatically, a "Pop Up" menu will be displayed advising the user to drop one or more of the AFTN addresses. Should this happen, the user should remove a number of addresses to leave on 21 and then re-produce the FPL including the addresses that were removed. Should this occur, you can call the Helpdesk for guidance if required.

**Note: The Central Flow Management Unit (CFMU) will SEND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and/or REJECTION messages in reply to all your SENT messages for IFR flights. Please REGULARLY check your pending messages after sending a flight plan or related message, as responses from you may be required.**



# Assisted Field Entry Tables

There are a number of tables contained within AFPEX to assist in the compilation of the FPL messages as follows:

## Type of Aircraft (Field 9)

Type	Name	Wake Turbulence
L200	Morava, L-200 Morava	L
L29	Delfin	L
L29A	Jetstar 8, Jetstar 6	M
L29B	Jetstar 731, Jetstar 2	M

Type of aircraft can be entered either manually or by selecting the comprehensive list contained with the AFPEX Application. To do this, **right-click** the 'Type of Aircraft' edit field to open the 'Search Aircraft Type' dialogue.

To list all aircraft types that are contained within the application, click the '**Search**' button and a comprehensive list will be displayed. If your aircraft type is not listed insert **ZZZZ** in the required field (9) and **TYP**/plain language description of aircraft type, in the field 18.

To specify the Aircraft Type or Name enter either the complete name or the first letter of the aircraft type, click Search and the system will display only those aircraft types as search result that match your criteria. Be aware that the search is case-sensitive, i.e. the system distinguishes between small letters and capitals.

The Search result lists all matching aircraft by Type, followed by the Name and the Wake Turbulence of the aircraft type in question. You can view details on an aircraft type by selecting it from the search result list and clicking View.

The system can only display a maximum of 250 entries. If there are more entries in the database that you need to view then the Previous/Next buttons should be used to scroll to the next/previous page of entries.

To enter an aircraft type into your message, either **double click** on the required entry or highlight it and click 'OK'.

## Departure/Destination/Alternate (Fields 13, 16)

You can either enter the departure, destination and alternate aerodrome(s) Aerodrome Location indicator (ADID), or search for them using the comprehensive list contained within the AFPEX Application.

To use the 'Search' function, right click in the relevant field on the FPL form (Departure, Destination, alternate etc) which will open the Search Aerodrome function.

### Search Aerodrome

✖ No entry is selected

Aerodrome	IATA	Name
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Search result

ADID	Name	IATA	FIR
AGAF	AFUTARA		
AGAR	ARONA		
AGAT	ATOIFI		
AGBA	BARAKOMA		
AGBT	BATUNA		
AGEV	GEVA		

To list all aerodromes within the database, click the 'Search' button and a comprehensive list will be displayed.

To Specify an Aerodrome, enter the Aerodrome ID (ADID), the IATA code, Aerodrome name or first letter of either of these. Then by Clicking 'Search' the application will display only the entries that match your search criteria.

Be aware that the 'Search' is case-sensitive. The Search result lists all matching aerodromes by *ADID*, followed by the Name, the IATA, and the FIR (if Applicable). You can view further details on an aerodrome by selecting it from the Search result list and clicking View.

The system can only display a maximum of 250 entries. If there are more entries in the database that you need to view then the Previous/Next buttons should be used to scroll to the next/previous page of entries.

To enter the Aerodrome into your message, either **double click** on the required entry or highlight it and click 'OK'.

Should your airfield of choice not be listed then enter 'ZZZZ' and enter the following **DEP**/plain language description of Departure airfield, **DEST**/plain language description of Destination airfield **ALTN**/plain language description of Departure airfield, into Field 18 of the FPL form.

## Flight Routeing (Route)

IFR and Mixed IFR/VFR flight routing assistance as detailed in the SRD (Standard Routeing Document) has been included in the AFPEX Application. These can be found by going to 'File' and then selecting 'Search Preferential Routes' from the drop down list. This will display the following:

### Search Preferential Route

✘ No entry is selected

Aircraft ID	Departure	Destination	Name
	EGAA	EGBB	

Search result

Name	Dep	Dest	Route
EGAA - EGBB - ...	EGAA	EGBB	DCT LISBO DCT IOM L10 WAL CHASE3A
EGAA - EGBB - ...	EGAA	EGBB	DCT LISBO DCT IOM L10 WAL CHASE1C
EGAA - EGBB - ...	EGAA	EGBB	DCT LISBO DCT IOM CHASE1E

To select a specific route, enter the Departure and Destination ADID in the relevant fields and click OK. Any available route between these two Aerodromes will be displayed. To display the routes available in the SRD just click the 'Search' button. This will display the entire list of routes available. To enter the required route into the FPL form, either **double click** on your selection, or highlight it and click 'OK'.

Once any route is selected and displayed in the FPL form, it can be amended manually by the user to meet their requirements.

### Other Information (Field 18)

You may enter your information in any order, using the appropriate oblique strokes and AFPEX will automatically sort this information into the required order before transmission of the message. Should invalid data be entered in this field, then the Red [✘] will remain displayed and the system will identify to the user the incorrect data that should be edited or deleted.

'Control + e' will check this information and display any errors at the top of the screen.

# Sending the Message

## Flight Plan is complete

No messages will be transmitted until all red [X]'s have been eliminated from the message form. This indicates that all mandatory fields have been correctly completed. It may be necessary to use 'Ctrl + e' to validate but the system will tell you this.


## Store this Message

Prior to sending the FPL (or other message type) you may wish to store this message for future use. To do this, click 'file' and 'store'. Name your message and click 'OK'

## Load this Message

To use this stored message again, select the appropriate template from **ATS** section, click 'File' and 'Load', select stored message by highlighting and click 'OK'.

## Send the Message

To send the message, click on the 'Send' Icon (  ) located at the top left of the FPL form.

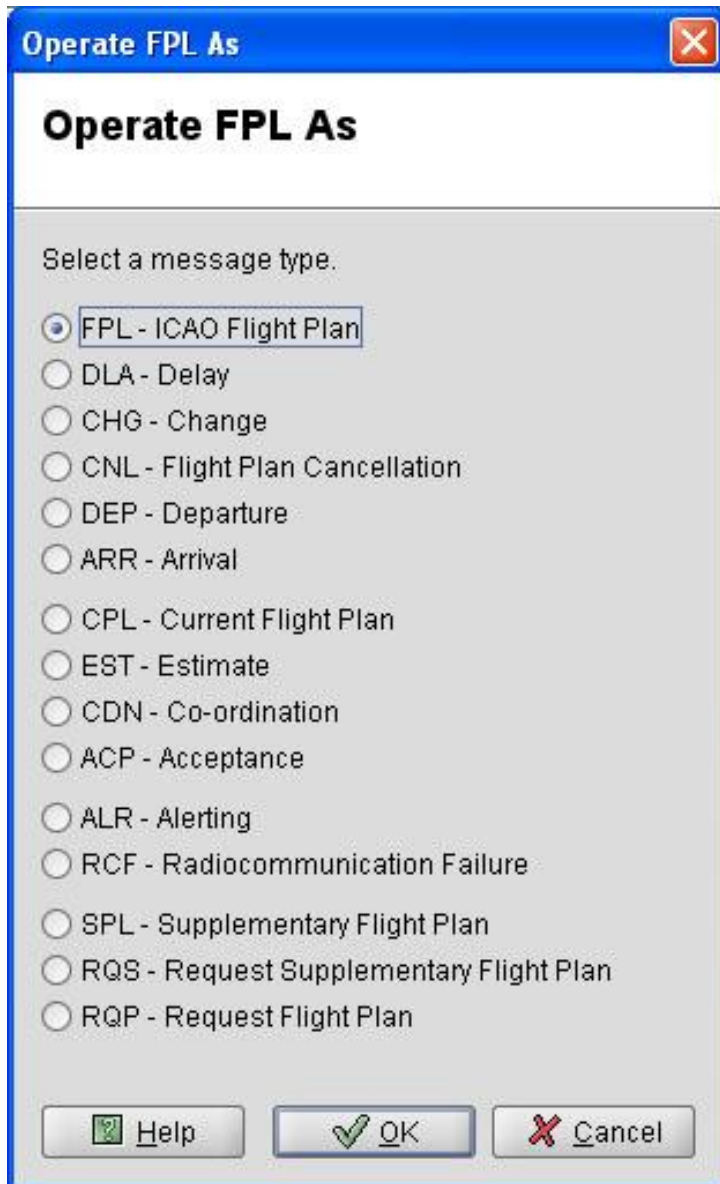
The message will then be shown in your Out folder under 'View', 'Message Folders'. It will remain there for 30 days.

# Sending a Flight Related message

Using the sent Flight Plan information, it is possible to create other messages related to that FPL, such as a DEP message. This saves time as the system will extract the required information and addressing from the FPL to construct a new message ready for editing and sending.

Select a FPL from Message folders or by using the retrieval function, click on the message to highlight, **right-click**, '**View**', '**File**' and '**Operate FPL as**'

For example, you send a FPL for an A/C departing from your airfield. When the A/C takes off you will want to send a departure message. Select related FPL message as described above and the following screen will appear:



Check the box next to the DEP message type and click '**OK**'. AFPEX automatically displays a Departure message template containing all the required details ready to be edited and sent. All the message types shown above may be created using this function.

# Trouble shooting

## User name or password Error

Any entry will be checked against the user profile stored in the database on the server. If the user name or password is entered incorrectly and does not match the profile, the following "Pop Up" will appear:

**"Username and password do not match!"**

You will be allowed three attempts to login then the system will automatically lock you out. (As an additional security feature, you will **not** be notified that you have exceeded your login attempts). Should you be locked out of the AFPEX application, you should contact the AFPEX Helpdesk.

## Passphrase Error

If one or more character(s) of the passphrase are entered incorrectly, the following "Pop Up" will appear:

**"Passphrase is not correct"**

The 'passphrase' is a security function that applies to certain user profiles (See AFPEX Operators Guide for more details). If you enter the passphrase incorrectly, then this error message will appear. As with the password, you will only get three attempts to enter your passphrase correctly with no indication that you have been locked out after the third failed attempt. Should you fail to enter the passphrase correctly three times you will need to contact the AFPEX Helpdesk to have it re-set.

## Already Logged on

If you attempt to log onto your AFPEX mailbox when you are already logged on, the following "Pop Up" will be displayed:

**"This user is already logged in. Do you want to login?"**

If you select **yes**, the system will automatically force any other user currently logged in on the same login to be logged out allowing you to complete the login process. If you select **No** the login process will be aborted leaving the initial login connected. If you believe nobody else should be using your account and this error continues to occur it is recommended that a change of password is carried out. If it continues to occur then please notify the AFPEX helpdesk.

## Auto Logout

As an additional security feature, AFPEX will recognise if the User does not carry out any functions such as moving the Mouse or making any key strokes on their keyboard during their login session for a pre-determined period of time. Should this occur the user will be automatically logged out and the following 'Pop Up' will be displayed and the user should log back into their AFPEX account:

**"The session has been idle too long. You have been logged out"**

## **Session Limit Reached**

The AFPEX application can only allow a certain number of Users to be logged in at once. This is a large number of users and it is highly unlikely that this threshold will be reached. However, should this occur the following "Pop Up" will be displayed at logon:

**"The maximum number of users for this terminal has already been reached."**

Should this "Pop Up" appear repeatedly, you should contact the AFPEX Helpdesk.

## **Utilising the Fax Backup**

Circumstances may arise when Users cannot access AFPEX. This may be due to:

- Local ISP outages
- Hardware issues
- Problems with the AFPEX system
- The user being in an area where they have no internet access

In these situations, contact the Helpdesk and they will supply you with the necessary Fax number and template to allow submission of your messages.

## **Contact us**

**24 Hour Helpdesk**

**0845 601 0483**

**Registration and General**

**Enquiries**

**0845 601 0484**

**Email**

**[flightplanningonline@nats.co.uk](mailto:flightplanningonline@nats.co.uk)**