Go paperless and assure more

Switch to electronic Air Waybills for faster, efficient, reliable freight guaranteed.
An e-Air Waybill (e-AWB) is an electronic version of the paper Air Waybill. As of January 1, 2019, IATA have announced the e-AWB will become the default contract of carriage for all air cargo shipments on enabled trade lanes.

The e-AWB is our first step to succeed in e-Freight, and to reach a completely paperless supply chain, saving you time and money. So, why not go paperless with e-AWB and assure more benefits in your shipping process.

**e-Freight:** The goal of e-Freight is to digitalise paper documents throughout our supply chain, providing you a more cost efficient, accurate and reliable shipping process.

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**It pays to stay ahead**

To encourage our customers to make the switch — rather than get left behind — we’re globally implementing the Paper AWB charge for all 057/074 prefix AWBs. This charge will be applied in case a forwarder did not sign the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA) with AFKL and/or did not send a FBW.

- IATA charge code to be used: BI
- Charging basis: per MAWB
- Charge value: € 3
- Start date: Quarter 2 2019
- As of 2nd of December 2019: Value of charge will increase to € 11

**How does the e-AWB replace paper?**

The e-AWB is the digital transportation contract we sign with you, our customers. It consists of the Freight Air Waybill (FWB; the equivalent of the front page of the classical AWB) and the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA) (the digital equivalent of the reverse paper AWB). By signing the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA), you accept the conditions of carriage now, and in the future. It is important to send high quality FWB messages with correct and complete content.

When using e-AWBs, you never need to print, handle or archive a paper AWB. The e-AWB will update the operational systems at the airline. It will get its legal status upon delivery of the cargo, when we, send the message Received From Shipper (RCS).

Airlines have signed Multilateral e-AWB Agreements (MeA) with IATA. As a shipper or forwarder, you can do the same and get connected.

**Paperless means paperless**

You can trust our single process approach: no need to deliver your paper AWB to the final destination. If a paper AWB is still used at some stations, we will take care of it.

**How do I switch to the e-AWB?**

First, you sign the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA) with IATA. By signing this agreement, both forwarders (or shippers) and airlines subscribe to the intention to use e-AWBs instead of paper AWBs.

When we approve the quality of your FWB messages we activate your account, and you receive an Activation Notice. Are you a freight forwarder with multiple offices? Give us the list with different IATA/CASS URN/Codes. Considering the Local operational conditions, we will activate the contract by sending the Activation Notice for each given location.
Now you can replace all paper AWBs by the e-AWB. There are different ways you can send a FWB:

a. Via your own IT system: Your system may already have FWB and FHL messages. To find out if it is the case, you can contact your IT department. If this is not the case, your IT department may eventually develop this feature on your current system.

b. Via CPS: Air France KLM offers to the customer the possibility to use CPS (Cargo Portail Services). It's a free portal that will allow you to do your e-Booking and e-AWB/ e-Hawb.

c. other 3rd parties, providing the possibility to send FWB: You can use an IT Solution Provider and use a system that meets your needs, including building and sending FWB and FHL messages. Several tools are available on the market.

Air France-KLM have signed the Single process. When you sign the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA) and accept the activation, you can start doing e-AWBs. No need to deliver your paper AWB to the airline. If a paper AWB is still required at final destination, the airline will take care of it and print the AWB paper.

Shorter handling time, faster lanes.
The e-AWB offers many benefits, like a shorter handling time. Because there is no separate documentation process flow next to the physical cargo process flow, a lot of time is saved. And for all our e-Freight customers, we have introduced specific fast lanes in Amsterdam and in Charles de Gaulle. These fast lanes will allow you to bypass the documentation process flow (documentation centre) and go to the loading/unloading dock directly.

Furthermore, the e-AWB ensures your shipment information arrives at its destination quicker than with paper AWBs, complying to the newest rules. Customs regimes (like in the US) increasingly work with digital messages. They also require information to be available much earlier. Today we comply by having our GHAs and hubs creating a FWB for every paper AWB. We no longer need to do this when we have implemented e-AWBs with all our customers.

All your benefits of the e-AWB:

Efficiency: saves you time and money, due to less handling of paper documents
Quality: digitally accurate data; no lost documents
Sustainability: lower carbon footprint
Confidentiality: more secured data
Flight optimisation: AWB information is received much earlier
Improved invoicing: giving us the opportunity to replace manual adjustment on the paper AWB by electronic updates.
Eye on the future: the first step towards e-Freight, and a smoother shipping process

Your e-AWB switch checklist

- Contact the e-freight team: mail.efreight@airfrance.fr
- Sign the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA): www.formstack.com/forms/iata-multilateral (check if this is not done already by your company)
- Choose your preferred solution for sending electronic messages FWB/FHL
- Connect your shipping experts to the e-freight team, to discuss details on sending FWB messages and check the quality of FWB / FHL messages during a test phase.
- The airline sends an Activation Notice
- Send your first e-AWB and get rid of the paper.
Everything you need to know about…

Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA) and Activation Notice

Is there a fee charged by IATA for freight forwarders to join or participate to the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA)?
No, it is free of charge.

Are we obliged to use e-AWB after joining the multilateral e-AWB Agreement?
Yes, you are supposed to send a FWB for each shipment.

The role of freight forwarders

Me, a freight forwarder, and my airline partner have joined the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA). Can we start using e-AWBs right away?
No, you can start using the e-AWB when you receive your Activation Notice from us.

Do I need to send an activation notice to my airline partner(s), as a freight forwarder?
No, the Airline always sends the Activation Notice.

What should I, as freight forwarder, do when I do not agree with the details of the Activation Notice?
Please notify us immediately that the Activation Notice is not accepted.

Is it possible to start with a limited set of products or destinations per freight forwarder?
No, when an Activation Notice is agreed upon, the freight forwarder mentioned is always fully committed to the e-AWB.

What is an Activation Notice?
Before you can use the e-AWB, airline and freight forwarder need to decide about the locations where they will start with e-AWBs. Together they can validate and ensure e-AWB operational readiness of both parties (such as business processes, electronic communication and data quality). The Activation Notice is a formal way for airlines to confirm these decisions to forwarders, before using the e-AWB.

What happens if an Activation Notice is sent without confirmation from the freight forwarder?
The Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA) states that the Activation Notice must be sent only after a mutually confirming locations and starting dates. Any Activation Notice that is not agreed upon by all involved parties is considered invalid.

Is the activation based on origin-destination, or does it apply for all destinations from an airport location?
The activation is usually for all destinations leaving an airport. But you can indicate specificities (applicable routes or types of cargo) by using the comments column in the Activation Notice.

If I start using e-AWBs, can I choose the destinations?
No. You can use e-AWBs for all destinations, because of our so-called single process approach. When you have signed a Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA) and received an activation notice, your cargo can be forwarded without a paper AWB. In case a paper AWB is needed at the final destination, we will take care of it at our hubs (CDG or AMS).
Staying digital on a daily basis

Where can I find the Special Handling Codes (SHC) related to the e-AWB?
There are four Special Handling Codes for the e-AWB:
• The Electronic Contract of Carriage (ECC): e-AWB inserted by airlines automatically.
• ECP: e-AWB for a non-eligible final destination. Inserted by airlines automatically.
• The Electronic AWB Without Pouch (EAW) is a completely paperless shipment.
• For when a shipment does not have a paper AWB and no pouch inserted by the forwarder.
• The Electronic AWB with Pouch (EAP): an e-AWB with a paper pouch.

Is the format of the e-AWB the same as the paper Air Waybill?
Yes. You will find all the same fields.

Can I ship special cargo using e-AWB?
When shipping AVI, DGR, and other special cargo, your first step is to replace the Master AWB. You can ship special cargo under Single Process, but a FWB containing all necessary information (such as product Codes and Special Handling Codes) is still required. Also, SHC EAP must be included. Other required documents in paper format (such as Shippers Declarations and CITES) must still accompany shipment.

Can I send Charges Collect shipments (CC) or Letter of Credit under e-AWB?
No. For now, these are the only two exceptions for e-AWB.

What do I need to do when a FWB is rejected?
You should receive an FNA explaining why this FWB was rejected. You must change the FWB if RCS has not been done, and resend it.

Which regulations and specifications have to be considered when exchanging Air Waybill data electronically?
The FWB message is the electronic equivalent of the front of the paper Air Waybill. This means that any regulation and completion instructions, which apply to the Master AWB, also have to be considered when exchanging data electronically.

How can FWB and/or FHL information be transmitted to the carrier?
Messages can be transmitted via Cargo-IMP message or Cargo-XML message, of which the former is most commonly used. There are many IT software solutions available for freight forwarders.

If FWB/FHL messages are sent through a third party provider (e.g. Traxon), are the messages compatible with the requirements of FWB/FHL messages?
Yes. But because there may be slight variations in the positions of the fields, such as contact information, the FWB/FHL messages need to be tested and approved before your account is activated.

Can I update the FWB information?
Yes, you can update the FWB message as often as necessary, until the shipment has received a so-called RCS-status from us. Any update to the FWB or FHL must be sent as a complete new FWB or FHL message. There is no limit to the number of FWBs you can send for each shipment. Only the last sent version of FWB will be used. Any FWBs sent after the RCS-status will be rejected and you received an FNA message.

What if I need to make changes to the FWB after you set the RCS-status?
Please contact us, you will have to do a CCA request same for a paper LTA.

Is the MRN to be added to the FWB or FHL?
If only a FWB is sent, the MRN needs to be included in the FWB message in the OCI fields. If there are House AWBs, the MRN has to be in the FHL messages, in which case no MRN numbers are to be included in the FWB / Master AWB.
How do I know that the FWB is accepted?
After transmitting the FWB, you directly receive automated feedback:
• FMA (only for AWB 057): FWB is accepted and your goods can be delivered.
• FNA: FWB is not accepted. The FWB must be updated and you should resend it.
To prevent errors, please check whether the FWB message includes all the necessary information that used to be in the AWB.

To whom are the rejection messages (FNA) sent?
The FNA is always sent to the originator, which is the freight forwarder (PIMA address ex CCA Champ Cargo Systems – former Traxon).

How long does it take to transmit an FWB, and receive an FMA or FNA response?
Mostly the transmission of the FWB will only take a few seconds, after which the FMA or FNA is sent out. We recommend allowing a few minutes, since sometimes multiple IT platforms are communicating with each other.

Will countries that do not accept e-AWBs, accept laser print AWBs?
It depends on the country.

Will there still be a delivery receipt?
Yes, you have several options:
• RCS Message (electronically): your shipment was accepted and a transportation contract was signed.
• Cargo Receipt (physical): can be printed after the goods acceptance.
• Shipper’s Delivery Note (physical): can be stamped directly at the delivery. In addition, you can include the security status.

How can the relevant security information be transmitted via FWB?
Security information ECSD special codes can be transmitted in the FWB (from FWB version 16) in a format as specified in the IATA CIMP manual.
• ECSD: Electronic Consignment Security Declaration
• SPX/SHR/SCO: Special codes to place in FWB to show that cargo is secure.

What happens if the transmission of the FWB data fails and you receive a FNA message?
In this case, the following irregularity procedures apply:
• Renewed FWB transmission before goods acceptance;
• Printout or delivery of a MAWB copy with general conditions and terms at the back by you (PDF for e-Freight open stations).

It is legally important and mandatory to ensure any e-AWB shipment is not handled without successfully performing one of these two options. Otherwise there would be no legal transport agreement for the e-AWB in place.

Example for illustrative purposes only; please check CIMP Manual.

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Useful definitions

Need to freshen up your shipping terminology? Here are a few useful definitions that will help you fully enjoy the benefits of going digital.

FWB: Electronic message containing transportation and commercial information. The FWB is the digital equivalent of the front of the paper AWB. Note: this does not contain any legal conditions of carriage.

EAW: Electronic AWB Without Pouch. All documents are substituted by an electronic message, even the Air Waybill (e-AWB/FWB). No paper pouch is handed to the airline by the forwarder. SHC added in the FWB by Freight Forwarder.

EAP: Electronic AWB with Pouch. The AWB is substituted by an electronic message (e-AWB/FWB), but there is still a paper pouch with other documents attached to the shipment. SHC added in the FWB by Freight Forwarder.

ECC: Electronic Contract of Carriage (signifies that the FWB replaces the paper AWB as the legally recognized contract between forwarder and carrier). SHC entered in FWB automatically by airline noting that a Multilateral e-AWB Agreement (MeA) is signed, meaning no paper (copy) of the AWB is required at acceptance of the shipment.

ECP: Special Handling Code (SHC) added automatically in the FWB by the carrier. e-AWB for a non-eligible final destination.

EDI: Electronic Data Interchange. The transfer of structured data by agreed upon message standards, from one computer system to another.

EDI agreement: Contract between a forwarder and an airline or IATA, in which the forwarder accepts the conditions of carriage on all FWB sent in the future. The EDI contract replaces the paper AWB that used to be the contract. Signed with an airline (bilateral) or with IATA (multilateral).

Eligible network: The eligible network is dependent on the amount of countries where local authorities accept digital documents instead of paper documents.

FHL: An IATA Cargo-IMP (Interchange Message Procedure) defined EDI message type. This message type is used to submit an extract of House Waybill data in an electronic way. The data is required for customs filing as well as regulatory compliance checks.

SHC: A Special Handling Code is a code defined by IATA that is attached to a Shipment to indicate specific operational attention or handling requirements.


FMA: The FMA is an acknowledgment message sent automatically to the sender of the FWB/FHL only for Air Waybill 057. It assures you that AFKL has received your message in their system. Then, you can deliver your goods to the agency.

FNA: The FNA is a rejection message sent automatically to the sender of the FWB/FHL. It indicates a syntax/content error of the FWB message. You need to correct the FWB and send it back. You will not be allowed to deliver your goods until you have received a FMA message. The error message starts with the name of the segment (example: RTD), and a description of the error (Example: Invalid or missing rate description details - AWB rate line number).

RCS: Received Cargo Shipment is the Cargo-IMP status code to represent the current status of a consignment. RCS means that the consignment has been physically received from the shipper or the shipper’s agent and is considered ready for carriage. This status is provided in a Cargo IMP FSU (Freight Status Update) Message.

Single process approach: when you have signed an EDI agreement (bilateral or multilateral) and accepted the activation, you can start using e-AWBs. No need to deliver your paper AWB to the final destination. If a paper AWB is still used at some stations, we will take care of it.