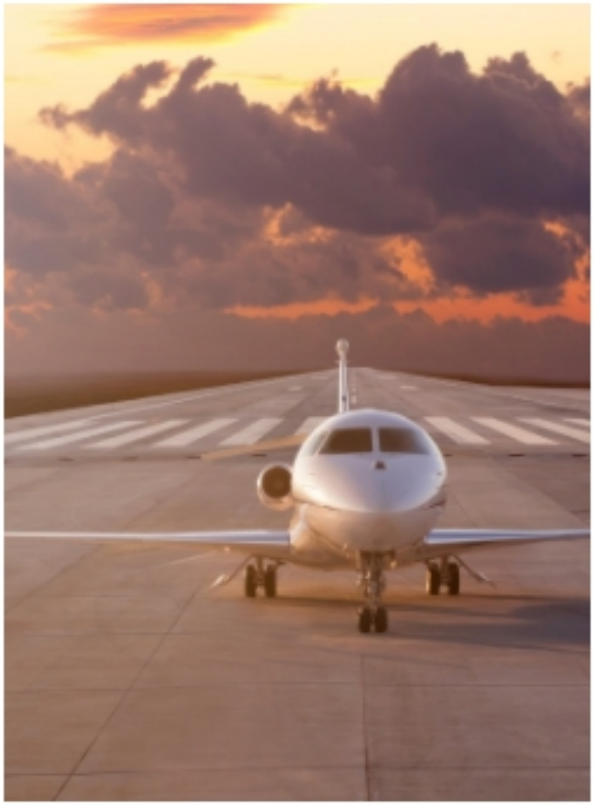
THE VALUE OF PREPAREDNESS: HOW TO SAFELY WEATHER A PRIVATE JET DIVERSION

News / Business aviation







Kevin Singh, the founder, and CEO of Icarus Jet, takes us through a recent operational challenge encountered by the company's trip support team and sheds light on the value of having pre-established protocols to weather an operational storm.

In the world of private jet travel, there is an inherent expectation of seamless, flexible, and luxurious experiences. Passengers often board these exclusive flights with the belief that they will arrive at their destination with no hitches along the way. However, behind the scenes, private jet providers like Icarus Jet work tirelessly to ensure that this expectation is met while complying with the highest industry safety standards.

This entails not only meticulous planning but also the ability to adapt to unforeseen challenges at a moment's notice. Here, not only having tight protocols will enable a company to provide safe and feasible solutions, but also having the right personnel and company culture in place to make timely decisions while always maintaining an open and transparent dialogue with authorities, and all involved stakeholders.

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For starters, the value of established protocols for the seamless delivery of a private jet trip support service should not be overlooked. Just like a checklist performed by a crew before departure, a trip support operations team must have vetted procedures to handle regular arrangements and also to manage unusual events that may occur throughout a flight. This level of preparedness is what distinguishes a truly professional and reliable trip support service.

In a recent operation at Grosseto Airport in Italy, which is primarily an Italian Air Force Base (more on that specific detail, shortly), we encountered a challenging situation involving parking that tested our ability to adapt and improvise. The initial plan was to drop passengers at Florence Airport, but due to a high volume of incoming aircraft, we knew that securing a slot there might be problematic. As a precautionary measure, we immediately checked the slot availability in Grosseto as an alternative.

Nevertheless, while our partners in Florence initially informed us that there was no slot availability at our preferred arrival time, they ultimately managed to secure a slot for the initial timings we had received from the passengers – we needed to stick to a Sunday arrival (requested by the passengers) and therefore securing a slot was crucial.

Operating in a military airport

Private aviation offers customers the possibility to control their travel experience. This also means choosing the departing and landing location with the aim of avoiding more crowded terminals. One of those options is accessing military airports yet these occasionally have stricter regulations and reduced slots to work with from a trip support company perspective.

The previous was the case with Grosseto, as it presented its own set of challenges as a joint Civil/Military airfield. We had to wait for military approval for a two-day parking arrangement, and after constant follow-up with the handler, we received a Prior Permission Required (PPR), which specifies that for certain aeronautical activities, permission from the authorities must be obtained. This granted us the green light to operate and park there.

However, just a day before the operation, we received a message from the handler that our parking request had been rejected by the Airport Authority in Grosseto. The reason? They were only permitting a quick turnaround and when faced with this abrupt change of plans, we had to explore alternatives, and decided to park in Rome–Ciampino International Airport.

The rejection in Grosseto left us baffled, as we had received approval in previous operations, and hence decided to dig deeper to understand the reason behind this situation. The investigation revealed that our parking was denied due to traffic congestion and an Aircraft on Ground (AOG) situation that occupied the slot. In other words, an Aircraft took our approved stand due to its AOG status and since slots are limited in Grosseto, they rejected us – You be the judge…

Learning from adversity

This experience highlights the importance of having established procedures for planning and executing private jet flights, especially when operating an aircraft through a military airport. While it is possible to land a private jet at a military airport, it involves a complex and challenging process and private jet providers need to carefully plan, coordinate, and navigate the unique requirements and restrictions associated with these airfields to ensure a successful landing and operation.

The coordination process involves a team of professionals with expertise in various aspects of trip

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support, including flight planning, ground handling, catering, and fuel provisioning. Here, training and preparedness play a major role in a positive outcome, and therefore investing in your personnel, continuously, is the only way to secure a flawless and hassle-free service, even if the backstage is chaotic at times – the client must only enjoy the ride and shouldn't worry about anything else.

The incident at Grosseto demonstrated the effectiveness of Icarus Jet's operations team and its commitment to ensuring the safe and efficient delivery of private flight services, even when facing last-minute diversions. The structured approach and rigorous adherence to core values of safety, privacy, and service enable reputable private aviation providers to handle complex situations with ease, ensuring that clients reach their destinations safely and comfortably.

In conclusion, the world of private jet travel is not without its challenges, but with the right team and protocols in place, operators like Icarus Jet stand ready to navigate unexpected twists and turns, delivering on their promise of comfort and convenience without compromising the safety of the passengers or crew.

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