UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Civil Air Regulations Amendment 60-2
Effective: March 15, 1957
Adopted: February 6, 1957

AIR TRAFFIC RULES

VISUAL FLIGHT RULE (VFR) MINIMUMS WITHIN CONTROL ZONES FOR FLIGHTS WITH TRAFFIC CLEARANCE, AND SPEED CONTROL AND COMMUNICATION RULES IN HIGH DENSITY AIR TRAFFIC ZONES

Part 60 of the Civil Air Regulations contains the visibility and distance from cloud minimums for VFR flights within a control zone. Where a traffic clearance has been issued, an aircraft may be operated at lower minimums than when one is not issued; however, current regulations do not specify what the reduced visibility and distance from cloud minimums shall be when such air traffic clearance is issued. The Board proposed to clarify this situation in Draft Release 56-7 (21 F.R. 1748).

The requirements of Part 60 for VFR flights in control zones do not distinguish between control zones of varying traffic densities. In order to determine whether special limitations should be applied in Part 60 for areas in the vicinity of airports having unusually high traffic densities, Special Civil Air Regulation SR-408A was promulgated by the Board. This special regulation delegated to the Administrator sufficient authority to permit him to designate a "high density air traffic zone" in the Washington, D. C., area and to establish special operating rules in the zone on a temporary basis. These special rules were designed to facilitate movement of traffic in the zone under VFR conditions in a safer and more efficient manner. SR-408A terminated on July 31, 1956. As a result of the experience gained under SR-408A, a notice of proposed rule making was published as Draft Release 56-22 (21 F.R. 6302), "Speed Control and Communication Rules for Certain High Density Airports," which contained proposals for the addition to Part 60 of certain provisions especially applicable to high density areas.

Certain matters set forth in Draft Releases 56-7 and 56-22 were, pursuant to notice, the subject of oral argument before the Board on January 14, 1957.

The objective of Draft Release 56-7 was to establish specific visibility and distance from cloud minimums below which VFR flight in a control zone would be prohibited. It was proposed to establish one mile as the visibility minimum for a VFR flight in a control zone (one-half mile exception if the restriction to visibility were of a local nature) and to require that all VFR flights remain "clear of clouds."

The views expressed by the interested parties, both in written comment and oral argument, varied from the belief that the weather minimums proposed by the Board were unnecessarily and unduly restrictive, particularly with respect to general aviation, to the belief that the Board's proposal did not go far enough in the way of imposing restrictions on VFR flight within control zones.

After careful consideration of all of the views expressed on this subject, the Board has concluded that with one minor exception the proposal as contained in Draft Release 56-7 is not unduly burdensome and is necessary in the interest of safety. In fact, the Board has already established by regulation the principle that in uncontrolled airspace a minimum of one-mile visibility is necessary in order that a VFR pilot may properly control the attitude and flight path of his aircraft by visual observation of the ground, and that he may be able to avoid collision with terrain or surface obstacles. The same objective is sought by the proposed visibility minimum in control zones.

The Board also proposed to prescribe a visibility minimum for helicopter operations. However, upon evaluation of the views expressed in regard to this proposal, the excellent safety record of helicopter operations, and the unique flight characteristics of helicopters, the Board is of the opinion that safety considerations do not require the application of separate visibility minimums to helicopters at this time.

The objective of Draft Release 56-22, "Speed Control and Communication Rules for Certain High Density Airports," was to delegate to the Administrator the authority to designate a High Density Air Traffic Zone in which a speed limit and two-way radio communications would be required.

The comments made with respect to the proposed speed-limit rule indicated an almost unanimous agreement that such a rule would enhance the safety of flight operations in a high density zone.

With respect to the two-way radio communication requirement, it is found that there is agreement on the need for a rapid exchange of intelligence between the airport traffic control tower and all pilots in order to accomplish a safe and efficient movement of traffic at a high density airport; however, there is a divergence of views as to the extent of the area in which the two-way radio requirement would be applicable. It is the view of some that the communication requirements should apply to the entire zone, while others believe the rule should apply only to those aircraft taking off or landing at the high density airport. It appears unlikely that the Administrator will be able to control all the VFR traffic within such a zone or, in fact, even handle effectively the volume of communications which such requirement would create. Accordingly, it appears advisable at this time to require communication with the appropriate traffic control facility from aircraft engaged in VFR flight only when the pilot intends to take-off or land at or fly within the traffic pattern of designated airports within the high density zone.

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of these amendments (21 F.R. 1748 and 21 F.R. 6302), and due consideration has been given to all relevant matter presented.

In consideration of the foregoing, the Civil Aeronautics Board hereby amends Part 60 of the Civil Air Regulations (14 CFR, Part 60 as amended) effective March 15, 1957.

1. By amending § 60.18 by adding a new paragraph (f) to read as follows:

60.18 Operation on and in the vicinity of an airport. * * *

(f) High density air traffic zone. In any area not above 3,000 feet above the surface in which the Administrator finds that the volume of traffic is such as to adversely affect safety, he shall designate such airspace as a high density air traffic zone in which the following rules shall apply:

(1) Speed. No person shall operate an aircraft within a high density air traffic zone at a speed in excess of 180 mph or 160 knots indicated airspeed unless operational limitations for a particular aircraft require greater airspeeds, in which case the aircraft shall not be flown in excess of the minimum speed consistent with the safe operational limitations of the aircraft.

(2) Communications requirements. No person shall take off or land an aircraft at or enter the traffic pattern of a designated high density airport unless radio communication with the appropriate air traffic control facility has been established: Provided, That an aircraft not equipped with functioning two-way radio may be operated to or from an airport located within the zone if prior authorization from the appropriate airport traffic control tower has been given.

2. By amending § 60.30 (a) (1) and (2) and by adding a note thereafter to read as follows:

60.30 Ceiling and distance from clouds. * * *

(a) Within control zones.

(1) Unless a clearance has been obtained from air traffic control, aircraft shall not be flown beneath the ceiling when the ceiling is less than 1,000 feet; or closer than 500 feet vertically under, 1,000 feet vertically over, or 2,000 feet horizontally from any cloud formation.

(2) When operating in accordance with a clearance issued by air traffic control, aircraft shall remain clear of clouds.

NOTE: With respect to this section, an air traffic clearance obtained under these provisions does not constitute authority for the pilot to deviate from Section 60.17 or any other applicable provision of the Civil Air Regulations.

3. By amending § 60.31 (a) and (b) to read as follows:

60.31 Visibility.

(a) Ground visibility within control zones.

(1) Unless a clearance has been obtained from air traffic control, a pilot shall not take off or land an aircraft at an airport within a control zone or enter the traffic pattern of such an airport when the ground visibility is less than 3 miles.

(2) When operating in accordance with a clearance issued by air traffic control, a pilot shall not take off or land an aircraft, other than a helicopter, at an airport when the ground

visibility is less than one mile: Provided, That where a local surface restriction to visibility exists, such as smoke, dust, or blowing snow or sand, the minimum visibility is one-half mile, if all turns after take-off and prior to landing and all flight beyond one mile from the airport boundary can be accomplished above or outside the area so restricted.

(b) Flight visibility within control zones.

(1) Unless a clearance has been obtained from air traffic control, a pilot shall not operate an aircraft in flight within a control zone when the flight visibility is less than 3 miles.

(2) When operating in accordance with a clearance issued by air traffic control, a pilot shall not operate an aircraft, other than a helicopter, within a control zone when the flight visibility is less than one mile: Provided, That such aircraft may take off or land at an airport within a control zone or enter the traffic pattern of such an airport when the minimum visibility is one-half mile due to a local surface restriction such as smoke, dust, or blowing snow or sand, if all turns after take-off and prior to landing and all flight beyond one mile from the airport boundary can be accomplished above or outside the area so restricted.

(Sec. 205 (a), 52 Stat. 984; 49 U.S.C. 425 (a). Interpret or apply sec. 601, 52 Stat. 1007, as amended; 49 U.S.C. 551)

By the Civil Aeronautics Board:

/s/ M. C. Mulligan

M. C. Mulligan
Secretary

(SEAL)

Part 60 last printed September 10, 1955.