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TITLE 14 - AERONAUTICS AND SPACE

CHAPTER I - FEDERAL AVIATION AGENCY

(Reg. Docket No. 531 Amendment 60- )

PART 60 - AIR TRAFFIC RULES

AIRPORT TRAFFIC AREA RULES

On October 7, 1960, notice was given in Draft Release No. 60-17 (25 F.R. 9868) that the Federal Aviation Agency had under consideration a proposal to amend Civil Air Regulations, Part 60, Section 60.18 "Operation On and In the Vicinity of an Airport."

Draft Release No. 60-17 proposed rules and requirements for the operation of aircraft at those airports where an airport traffic control tower is in operation. The principal objectives of the proposal were to standardize flight procedures at controlled airports and, to the extent practicable, to provide for the uniform application of traffic pattern rules which would enhance both the safety of airport flight operations and the abatement of aircraft noise as it affects adjacent communities.

Relatively few comments were received concerning avoidance of the airport traffic area. Some misinterpretation was apparent in that several comments indicated the writer thought the rule would prohibit operations at uncontrolled airports that lie within an airport traffic area unless two-way radio was utilized. This is not the intent of the rule and a clarifying note has been added.

Several comments recommended that all aircraft within the airport traffic area be required to abide by the communications requirements regardless of the airport of operation. The disadvantages of a situation wherein some of the aircraft in a particular area are not subject to control have previously been recognized and considered. However, maintenance of radio contact by pilots of all aircraft operating from uncontrolled airports located within an airport traffic area would impose a burden which would not result in a commensurate increase in safety. A "note" has been added to the communications section urging that pilots operating to or from uncontrolled airports maintain radio contact with the tower controlling the area to the extent feasible.

There were many comments for and against the two-way communications requirement itself. The opposition was mainly directed from individual pilots and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. The principal objection seemed to be based solely on economic considerations. A large majority of those supporting the requirement did so unequivocally while the remainder favored it with minor reservations.

The distinct benefits to be derived from two-way radio are readily apparent and were not made an issue in any of the comments received. Maintenance of an orderly and safe flight

environment in an increasingly complex situation necessitates the adoption of adequate radio requirements. The rule contained herein recognizes this requirement along with a provision covering the possibility of in-flight radio failure. The word "maintain," where used in connection with radio communications, is intended herein to mean "establish and maintain."

Some comments expressed concern in regard to the restrictive air speed stipulated in the draft release. It was apparent that turbine powered aircraft could not generally be operated within the proposed air-speed limitations. Accordingly, the rule is modified to accommodate the requirements of the turbine powered aircraft. Additionally, the rule is worded to permit operations such as military aircraft engaged in actual or simulated defense activities to operate at speeds in excess of those specified in the rule through authorization by air traffic control.

Apprehension was expressed to the effect that the provision regarding taxi authorization to a runway was not clear and, therefore, was subject to various interpretation. The rule is, therefore, modified to clearly state that authorization to taxi "to" a runway is construed as authorization to cross runways that intersect the taxi route unless instructions to the contrary are received.

The comments received indicated general agreement with the intent of the provisions concerning airport traffic area entry altitudes and traffic pattern altitudes. Adverse comments included recommendations ranging from deletion of all reference to altitude separation which would place all aircraft at one altitude to broadening of the separation standards proposed, including addition of lateral separation. Also advanced was the deletion of the words "at least," thereby restricting area flights to definite altitudes.

The justification for prescribing lateral separation is not considered sufficient to overcome the problem of compliance which could result. In fact, some lateral separation is provided due to the wider maneuvering area required of larger and faster aircraft. The rule retains the phrasing "at least" because this is considered desirable in that it allows flexibility of action.

In order to provide better continuity, the provisions on airport traffic area altitudes and traffic pattern altitudes have been consolidated and the helicopter procedures placed therein. A provision specifying altitudes for en route aircraft which may be authorized by air traffic control to traverse the area has been added.

Considerable opposition was directed to the requirement for pilots who had landed or taken off from an airport within the preceding 30 days to comply with all traffic pattern procedures, unanimously contending that the requirement was unrealistic. The validity of this contention is recognized and the provision has been deleted.

The proposed preferential runway requirements are retained and amplified by inclusion of a statement that air traffic control approval of a pilot's request to use a non-preferential runway in lieu of the preferential runway assigned does not constitute sanction of the deviation from the preferential runway procedures. Considerable opposition was also directed to the requirement for a written report within 48 hours in the event an assigned preferential runway was refused by a pilot. Since a report may not be necessary in every case the rule is modified to require the report only when requested by air traffic control.

Preferential runway procedures for particular airports will be established or revised when such action will give promise of alleviating the over-all noise abatement problem in the area concerned and there is no derogation of safety. Such procedures will be developed on a local basis.

It is appreciated that the conduct of particular operations may occasionally require noncompliance with certain provisions. The proposal allowed for granting of exceptions by air traffic control when such exceptions are warranted. This allowance, however, was apparently overlooked by some respondents. The rule herein retains the provision wherein air traffic control is granted authority to allow exceptions. Air traffic control, as related to this rule, primarily refers to the airport traffic control tower upon which the airport traffic area is centered, although, in some instances the air traffic control authority exercised under this rule may originate or be transmitted by other air traffic control facilities.

The need for standard traffic pattern flight procedures at airports without control towers is recognized. Accordingly, a draft proposal is being developed which would establish uniform standard traffic pattern flight procedures at most uncontrolled airports. This future proposal would provide for the establishment of "special" traffic pattern rules at those uncontrolled airports where the standard pattern cannot be applied. This proposal will also consider the problem of straight-in approaches at uncontrolled airports.

One of the more controversial issues of the proposed rule concerned the requirement for a pilot to maintain radio contact with the Flight Service Station, to the extent his equipment permits, while within 5 statute miles of an uncontrolled airport on which the Flight Service Station is located. Reasons advanced in opposition were that this would interfere with communications on company radio and on UNICOM, that it would create a false sense of security in the pilot's mind and that it would be an undue burden on both the pilot and the Flight Service Station. Some credibility must, of course, be given to all of these arguments; however, none is considered to justify deletion of the requirement. The very fact that three separate facilities, i.e., company radio, UNICOM and FSS, frequently supply different information to different aircraft at the same time for the same airport frustrates an effective airport advisory service and can result in hazard to safety of flight. A centralized source of flight advisory service certainly presents the best solution to an ever-increasing problem.

Likewise, the other objections to the proposal for uncontrolled airports are considered as subordinate to the benefits to be derived from the adoption of the rule. True, nonradio aircraft operating from uncontrolled airports might create a

problem but the situation certainly would be less acute than that existing today. Some objected on the ground that present aeronautical charting procedures do not indicate the physical location of Flight Service Stations. Cognizance of this fact has been taken and the rule modified to specify that the FSS communication requirements shall only be mandatory at uncontrolled airports where an FSS is charted to show its location at that airport. This indication will be published on the appropriate Sectional Aeronautical Chart of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Since these charts are normally revised only twice yearly, there will necessarily be some delay in total implementation of the FSS procedures.

Current issues of the FAA Airman's Guide will contain a list of FSS locations at which the airport advisory service will be established concurrent with the effective date of a revised sectional chart.

On November 4, 1960, notice was given in Draft Release No. 60-17A (25 F.R. 10772) that the Federal Aviation Agency would provide an additional period of 15 days after December 14, 1960, the final date for comment to Draft Release No. 60-17, in order to permit interested persons to reply to comments in the Docket File. Two comments were received in response to Draft Release No. 60-17A.

In consideration of the foregoing, Sections 60.18 and 60.60 are hereby amended as follows:

1. By amending Section 60.18 to read as follows:

§60.18 Operation On and In the Vicinity of an Airport.

Aircraft shall be operated on and in the vicinity of an airport in accordance with the following rules:

(a) General Rules.

(1) Avoidance of Airport Traffic Areas.

No person shall operate an aircraft within an airport traffic area, except for the purpose of landing or taking off at airports located within such airport traffic area, or unless authorized by air traffic control.

(2) Speed. Except as otherwise authorized by air traffic control, no person shall operate an aircraft within an airport traffic area at an indicated air speed in excess of 156 knots (180 mph) for reciprocating engine aircraft or 200 knots (230 mph) for turbine powered aircraft unless the operating limitations or military normal operating procedures require a greater air speed, in which case the aircraft shall not be flown in excess of such air speed.

(b) Airport With Control Tower. Aircraft being operated to, from, or on an airport served by an airport traffic control tower shall be operated in accordance

(ii) Other Control Towers. When operating an aircraft to, from, or on an airport at which an airport traffic control tower is operated by a person other than the United States Government, pilots of aircraft having radio equipment permitting two-way radio communications with the airport traffic control tower shall maintain such communications and pilots of aircraft having radio equipment permitting reception only from such control tower shall maintain a listening watch on the appropriate tower frequency while operating within the airport traffic area of that airport.

NOTE: Pilots of aircraft operating to or from uncontrolled airports within the airport traffic area are not required to maintain radio contact with the control tower. However, such pilots should maintain two-way radio communications or a listening watch when feasible.

(2) Clearances.

(i) Take-off, Landing or Taxi Clearance. During the hours the airport traffic control tower is in operation, a clearance shall be obtained prior to taxiing on a runway, taking off, or landing. Authorization to taxi "to" a runway is authorization to cross runways

that intersect the taxi route unless instructions to the contrary are received. Authorization to taxi "to" a runway shall not constitute a clearance to taxi "on" that runway.

(ii) When operating an aircraft not having functioning radio equipment at an airport where two-way radio is not required or where prior authorization has been obtained, pilots shall maintain visual contact with the control tower while operating within the airport traffic area of that airport and a clearance (light signal) shall be obtained prior to taxiing on a runway and prior to take-off and landing.

(iii) Air traffic control may grant continuing permission to the pilot of an aircraft to conduct landings and take-offs within an airport traffic area of a controlled airport without individual clearance for each such operation.

(3) Airport Traffic Area Altitudes. Unless prevented by terrain, obstacles or the VFR distance-from-cloud criteria, aircraft operated within the airport traffic area shall be flown at the following altitudes above the surface of the airport:

(i) Fast Aircraft. Fixed-wing aircraft operating at indicated air speeds in excess of 105 knots (120 mph)

shall be flown within the airport traffic area, including the traffic pattern, at an altitude of at least 1,500 feet, until maneuvering for a safe landing requires further descent.

(ii) Slow Aircraft. Fixed-wing aircraft operating at indicated air speeds of 105 knots (120 mph) or less shall be flown within the airport traffic area, exclusive of the traffic pattern, at an altitude of at least 1,000 feet. Upon joining the traffic pattern the aircraft shall be operated at an altitude between 1,000 and 800 feet, inclusive, until maneuvering for a safe landing requires further descent.

(iii) Helicopters. Helicopters shall be flown within the airport traffic area between 1,000 and 800 feet, until maneuvering for a safe landing requires further descent. The approach to land shall be made in a manner which avoids the flow of fixed-wing aircraft.

(iv) En Route Aircraft. Pilots of en route aircraft who receive clearance to transit the airport traffic area shall do so at the altitude level prescribed in this subsection which corresponds to their indicated air speed unless a different altitude is authorized or required by air traffic control.

(4) Traffic Pattern Direction. Pilots of fixed-wing aircraft shall circle the airport to the left unless the airport traffic control tower specifies a different traffic pattern.

(5) Preferential Runway System.

(i) When a preferential runway system has been established by the Federal Aviation Agency for an airport, pilots of large fixed-wing aircraft landing at or taking off from such airport shall use a preferential runway when it has been assigned by the airport traffic control tower; Provided, That pilots shall retain final authority and responsibility for the operational safety of the aircraft and if a pilot determination is made to use another runway on the basis of safety, such other runway shall be authorized by air traffic control, traffic and other conditions permitting. When such authorization is given, the pilot retains responsibility for deviation from the provisions of the preferential runway system.

(ii) When a runway other than the assigned preferential runway is used, the pilot shall file, if requested by air traffic control, a written report of the reasons therefor, including a full description of the safety basis for his determination to use such other runway. This report shall be forwarded within 48 hours to the Chief, Airport Traffic Controller, Federal Aviation Agency, located at that airport at which the report is required.

(6) Final Approach.

(i) When approaching to land on a runway served by a functioning instrument landing system (ILS), large fixed-wing aircraft equipped with a functioning ILS instrumentation shall be flown so as to remain at or above the glide slope between the outer marker and the middle marker; Provided, That when the VFR distance-from-cloud criteria require interception of the glide slope between the outer marker and the middle marker, large fixed-wing aircraft shall be flown so as to remain at or above the glide slope altitude between the point of interception and the middle marker.

(ii) When approaching to land on a runway served by visual glide slope devices, fixed-wing aircraft shall be flown so as to remain at or above the glide slope until arrival at the runway threshold.

(7) Departures. Aircraft taking off shall be operated as follows:

(i) Pilots shall, prior to departure, familiarize themselves with any departure procedures established by the Federal Aviation Agency and shall comply with such procedures upon departure.

(ii) When departure procedure altitudes for a particular airport are not specified and unless

otherwise required by the VFR distance-from-cloud criteria, large fixed-wing aircraft shall be flown so that a climb is made as rapidly as practicable to at least 1,500 feet above the surface; Provided, That the Federal Aviation Agency may specify a different rate of climb for a particular type of aircraft when a greater advantage in noise reduction can thereby be achieved with no derogation of safety.

(iii) When departure procedure altitudes for a particular airport are not specified for helicopters and unless otherwise required by the VFR distance-from-cloud criteria, such aircraft shall be flown so that a climb is made as rapidly as practicable to at least 800 feet above the surface.

(c) Airports Without Control Tower. Aircraft being operated to or from an airport not served by a control tower shall be operated in accordance with the following rules:

(1) Approaching to Land. When approaching for landing, fixed-wing aircraft shall be flown so that all turns are made to the left unless the airport displays light signals or standard visual markings of a type approved by the Federal Aviation Agency and which indicate that all turns are

to be made to the right. When approaching for landing, helicopters shall be flown in a manner which avoids the flow of fixed-wing aircraft.

(2) Departures. Pilots of aircraft operating from an airport shall conform to the traffic patterns established for that airport.

(3) Communications. Aircraft being operated to or from an airport not served by a control tower, but at which an operative Federal Aviation Agency Flight Service Station is located and so depicted on the current appropriate Sectional Aeronautical Chart of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, shall be operated in accordance with the following:

(i) Pilots of aircraft having radio equipment permitting two-way radio communications with the Flight Service Station shall maintain such communications when within 5 statute miles of the uncontrolled airport for purposes of receiving airport advisory information; Provided, That for instrument flight rules operations, air traffic control may require otherwise.

(ii) Pilots of aircraft having radio equipment permitting reception only from the Flight Service Station shall maintain a listening watch on the appropriate frequency when within 5 statute miles of the uncontrolled airport for purposes of receiving airport advisory information.

2. By amending Section 60.60 to add the following definitions:

Airport Traffic Area. An airport traffic area is that airspace within a circular limit defined by a 5 statute mile horizontal radius from the geographical center of an airport at which an operative airport traffic control tower is located and extending upwards from the surface to, but not including 2,000 feet above the surface.

Large Aircraft. Aircraft of more than 12,500 pounds maximum certificated take-off weight.

Person. Means an individual, firm, copartnership, corporation, company, association, joint-stock association, or body politic; and includes any trustee, receiver, assignee, or other similar representative thereof.

This amendment shall become effective

(Section 307 of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 (72 Stat. 749; 49 U.S.C. 1348).)

Administrator

Issued in Washington, D. C., on