

GOVERNMENT/INDUSTRY AERONAUTICAL CHARTING FORUM 04-01

April 28-29, 2004

Recommendation Document

Subject: Identifiers for Heliports & Helipads

Background/Discussion: Growth is taking place in the helicopter industry. New helicopters are equipped with advanced navigation systems that utilize GPS and related avionics for operations in both VFR and IFR conditions. The demand for inclusion of heliports and helipads in navigation systems used in helicopters is increasing. In order to include heliports and helipads in onboard navigation databases, they must be assigned unique identifiers.

At the present time only a limited number of heliports and helipads in the United States have official identifiers. In other cases identifiers may be informal, are not officially recognized, or not publicly known. There are also numerous heliport and helipads that have no identifiers whatsoever. Latitude/longitude information for most sites is non-existent. Without an essential means of unique identification, and without official latitude/longitude or other location information, these sites cannot be included in navigation databases.

There are no specific, officially-recognized standards for establishing identifiers for heliports and helipads. In some cases heliports may exist independently from airports, such as an oil platform or an established landing site at a hospital, commercial or industrial facility. In other cases, one or more helipads may be associated with and located on an existing airport. This raises a two-fold issue: some types of heliports should be given their own location identifier, while others should be given an identifier that associates them with the airport upon which they are located. Latitude/longitude information for most heliports and helipad is not officially known or publicly available.

In order to include IFR approach procedures specifically designed for heliports and helipads in navigation databases, the procedure coding must be linked to a location identifier, and the site must have a validated lat/long record. When retrieving the coded procedure from the onboard database, a pilot would first have to input the identifier of the intended landing site. Without a unique identifier and a lat/long record the site and any associated approach procedure cannot be coded.

Recommendations:

The FAA should:

1. Establish a standard for assigning unique identifiers for heliports and helipads (self-standing or associated with an airport).
2. Using established processes, assign and disseminate identifiers for heliports and helipads.
3. Collect and disseminate latitude/longitude information for heliports and helipads.

Comments: This subject should be coordinated with ICAO with regards to international standards.

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MEETING 04-01: Mr. Ted Thompson, Jeppesen, submitted this issue. Only a limited number of heliports and helipads in the United States have official FAA identifiers. In other cases identifiers may be informal, or not officially recognized by the FAA. There are also numerous heliports and helipads that have no identifiers whatsoever. Latitude/longitude information for most sites is non-existent. Without unique identifiers, and without latitude/longitude data, these sites cannot be included in NASR or navigation databases. Mr. Thompson stated that in order to include IFR helicopter approach procedures in navigation databases, the procedure must be coded to the location identifier with valid coordinates. Mr. Thompson requested coordinates to the center of each helipad, including helipads that exist independently from airports. AFS-420 submitted a listing of helipads/heliports with helicopter approach procedures that have no FAA identifier to ATA-100. **ACTION:** Jeppesen, ATA-100, NGA, and HHI.

MEETING 04-02: Mr. Ted Thompson, Jeppesen, stated that there is an increasing demand for helicopter data in databases. Numerous heliports and helipads have no FAA identifiers and latitude/longitude information for most sites is non-existent. Without unique identifiers, and without latitude/longitude data, these sites cannot be included in NASR or navigation databases. Mr. Thompson stated that in order to include IFR helicopter approach procedures in navigation databases, the procedure must be coded to the location identifier with valid coordinates. There is a need for coordinates to the center of each helipad, including helipads that exist independently from airports. In addition NOTAMs are available for specials (instrument procedures into hospital heliports) but in order for the system to work these facilities must have identifiers. Mr. Dick Powell, Aeronautical Information Services, requested a listing of pending specials. Mr. Powell stated that on August 11, 2004, a letter was sent to the Office of Airport Safety providing the names of heliports without official identifiers. This list contained heliports identified by AFS-420, HAI and NGA. About fifty helipads have been identified as missing FAA identifiers. Of these twenty-one have submitted 5010-5 forms to the ADO requesting the assignment of FAA identifiers, three have been assigned identifiers. ACF members discussed the issue of one instrument approach procedure for multiple helipads and how to identify multiple helipads on an airport. Mr. Thompson suggested giving each pad a unique five-character identifier, using the airport identifier and a number, e.g., CHI01. Mr. Thompson stated that he would solicit coordinate and identifier recommendations from Mr. Jim Terpstra and Mr. John Kasten. HAI requested that they be included in the coordination with Mr. Terpstra. Currently helipads do not have coordinates on the 5010. Recommendation was made that the Office of Airport Safety modify the 5010 form and require state and federal airport inspectors to collect helipad coordinates. Mr. Powell stated that he would solicit recommendations from Office of Airport Safety. Mr. Powell inquired if HAI collected coordinates on helipads. Mr. Charles Chung, HAI, stated that they do have a database populated from the FAA database, which they update manually. Mr. Powell inquired if the FAA could obtain a copy of the database. Mr. Chung suggested that he contact Mr. Harold Summers and Mr. Dick Wright, Safety Director for HAI. **ACTION:** AFS-420, Jeppesen, HAI, ATA-130, and Office of Airport Safety.

MEETING 05-01: Mr. Dick Powell, Aeronautical Information Services, reported that this issue was presented to the ACF last year and considerable work has been completed. Numerous heliports and helipads have no FAA identifiers and latitude/longitude information for most of these sites is non-existent. Without unique identifiers, and without latitude/longitude data, these sites cannot be included in NASR or navigation databases. In order to include IFR helicopter approach procedures in navigation databases, the procedure must be coded to the location identifier with valid coordinates. Mr. Powell reported that Flight Standards, Airports, NOTAM Office, and the Helicopter Community propose that a unique identifier be reserved for heliports prior to the heliport establishing a procedure. The identifier would be placed into NASR as

reserved and published as a reserved identifier in FAAO 7350.7. The reserve status would be deleted once the approach was operational. With a unique identifier the heliport could be added into the NOTAM system. Mr. Powell stated that the existing specials without identifiers will be assigned a reserved identifier and entered into NASR. Mr. Powell reported that AFS-420, HAI and NGA provided a list of heliports with specials. The listings were consolidated and submitted to the Office of Airport Safety requesting the associated heliport data. Mr. Powell requested and received ACF consensus on the reserve identifier proposal. **ACTION:** Aeronautical Information Services.

MEETING 05-02: Ms. Val Watson, Cartographic Standards, reported that NFDC received a list of private heliports that require identifiers. These facilities have been assigned reserved location identifiers. The identifiers were placed into NASR as reserved and published as a reserved identifier in FAAO 7350.7. Reserved identifiers will not be published in the NFDD. NFDC notifies the NOTAM Office when the proposed location identifiers are used. With a unique identifier the heliport could be added into the NOTAM system. Final approval of the procedure could be done with a reserved identifier. The reserve status would be deleted once the approach was operational. Mr. Tom Schneider, AFS-420, expressed concerns about the reserved identifier changing once the paperwork catches up to the identifier. Mr. Brad Rush, NFPO, and Mr. Schneider requested to be notified when a reserved location identifier is assigned to a facility. **ACTION:** Aeronautical Information Services and ATO-R.

MEETING 06-01: Mr. Dick Powell, ATO-R, was unable to attend the forum. Mr. John Moore, NACG, provided a brief recap of the issue. The FAA is working to create location identifiers for heliports and helipads in order to support helicopter operations. The initiative is intended to provide the required NOTAM support to private use heliports and helipads. Ms. Val Watson, Cartographic Standards, reported that Mr. Mark Washam, ATO-T, provided NFDC a listing of private heliports that require identifiers. These facilities have been assigned reserved location identifiers. Mr. Bill Hammett, AFS-420/ISI, expressed his concerns regarding the NOTAM Office ability to accept NOTAM data for facilities with a reserved location identifier. Mr. Hammett informed the group of a recent incident concerning a special procedure. Mr. Gary Bobik, ATO-R, stated that they are currently working to reeducate the NOTAM Office to prevent a recurrence of the issue. Ms. Valerie Watson recommended performing a test of the NOTAM system to insure that the system is operating accurately. Mr. Bobik responded that the NOTAM system is normally not used for testing. However, they will consider the recommendation. Ms. Watson inquired if the NOTAM system can accept four character alphanumeric reserved identifiers. Mr. Bobik stated that according to their contractors it could. However, the problem resides with the legacy systems. Sixteen facilities may not accept a FDC NOTAM with this type of identifier. Mr. Bobik stated that a FDC NOTAM will be issued and each Flight Service Station (FSS) will be polled to verify that the information has been disseminated properly. **ACTION:** ATO-R.

MEETING 06-02: Mr. John Moore, NACG, provided a brief recap of the issue. The FAA is working to create location identifiers for heliports and helipads in order to support helicopter operations. The initiative is intended to provide the required NOTAM support to private use heliports and helipads. At the 06-01 ACF, Ms. Valerie Watson, Cartographic Standards, inquired if the NOTAM system could accept four character alphanumeric reserved identifiers. Mr. Gary Bobik, ATO-R, responded that according to their contractors it could. However, the problem resides with the legacy systems. Sixteen facilities may not accept a FDC NOTAM with this type of identifier. Mr. Bobik agreed to test the legacy systems prior to the 06-02 ACF. Mr. Bobik was unable to attend the forum. In his absence, Mr. Gary Prock, ATO-R provided a current status report. The problem with the legacy systems will be eliminated in 2007.

Lockheed Martin will replace the outdated OASIS system with the new FS21 NOTAM system at 20 facilities across the United States. The first system will be installed at the Leesburg Automated Flight Service Station in February 2007. Mr. Prock stated that Lockheed Martin has not briefed the FAA on how the new FS21 system will handle reserved identifiers. Mr. Prock requested additional time to determine the compatibility of the new system and to determine if Mr. Bobik completed the legacy system test. The reserved identifiers can be entered into the USNS (U.S. NOTAM System) however, it has not been determined if these NOTAMs can be disseminated. Ms. Watson expressed her concerns stating that the FAA remains in violation of the GENOT (General Notice) that states the FAA must be able to publish NOTAMs on any instrument approach, including specials. Mr. Tom Schneider, AFS-420, commented that this is a safety issue. Most of these heliports are hospital heliports conducting lifeline operations and they need this critical information. Also, this is becoming a homeland security issue. The initial problem of no assigned identifiers for these facilities has been solved. However, the unresolved issue remains the NOTAMs. Mr. Bill Hammett, AFS-420 ISI, stated we need to determine if the test was run on the legacy system and what the results were. If the information is not being disseminated to the legacy systems we need to know now. In addition, we cannot wait until the end of 2007 to determine if the new FS21 system will work. Parallel testing needs to be completed on both systems. Mr. Prock responded contractually the FS21 system should be in service by July 2007. If the system does not support these identifiers a system change will need to be implemented at an additional cost to the FAA. **ACTION:** ATO-R.

MEETING 07-01: Mr. John Moore, NACO, provided a brief recap of the issue. The FAA is working to create location identifiers for heliports and helipads in order to support helicopter operations. The initiative is intended to provide the required NOTAM support to private use heliports and helipads. Mr. Gary Prock, ATO-R, reported at the last meeting that the FS21 System should be in service this July but if the new system didn't support these identifiers, a system change would need to be implemented at an additional cost to the FAA. At this meeting, Mr. Prock reported that the FS21 System is up and running at a few locations but that the FS21 equation got taken out of the issue and another solution is being developed

Mike Webb reported that this wasn't just a heliports issue and that it was also a special locations issue. Special locations have instrument approaches associated with them are not in the system and therefore not receiving NOTAMs. Of 700 Special Instrument Approaches throughout the country, there were approximately 230 locations that were not being covered by NOTAMs, but thanks to Gary Prock's and Val Watson's assistance the number has now been reduced to 25.

For Heliport IDs, information is being submitted to NFDC where a reserved ID is being assigned while the paperwork is going through the airport process. Brad Rush asked where the new process was documented. Tom Schneider remarked that the processing of these IDs didn't belong in the 8260.19, but that the process should reside in the NFDC Order. Ms. Valerie Watson agreed.

Henry Felices AAS-330, said that there is already a process in place for the processing and establishing of a new landing area, whether it is a private heliport, public airport, etc. The proponent is supposed to file FAA Form 7480-1, Notice of Landing Area Proposal, essentially requesting airspace from the FAA. When the heliport proponent doesn't file the proper documentation through the Airports Division, they don't get airspace registered. NFDC has a well documented process for assigning a LOC ID. The problem is that it can take as much as 3 to 4 years to get a private heliport LOC ID.

Mike Webb remarked that this is not just an Airports Division problem. There are many offices and funding issues to consider.

ACTION: Mike Webb to report on the documentation issue at the next ACF. He will work together with Val Watson, NFDC and the Mr. Henry Felices.

MEETING 07-01: Mr. John Moore, NACO, provided a brief recap of the issue. The FAA is working to create location identifiers for heliports and helipads in order to support helicopter operations. The initiative is intended to provide the required NOTAM support to private use heliports and helipads. (Note: This item also relates to ACF #05-02-177, Identifiers for Copter Point-in-Space procedures.)

Progress has been made, but work is still underway to determine how the new identifiers will flow between Flight Standards, Flight Procedures and Flight Service Stations and disseminated via the FAA's new "FS-21" NOTAM system.

Mr. Mike Webb and Mr. Gary Prock were not present and had no reports.

ACTION: Mike Webb and Gary Prock to report on issue at the next ACF.

MEETING 08-01: Mr. John Moore, FAA/NACO, provided a brief recap of the issue. The FAA is working to create location identifiers for heliports and helipads in order to support helicopter operations. The initiative is intended to provide the required NOTAM support to private use heliports and helipads. (Note: This item also relates to ACF Issue 05-02-177, Identifiers for Copter Point-in-Space procedures.)

Mr. Mike Webb, FAA/AFS-420, briefed that the interim system is working well. Problems include naming of private heliports and not getting into NOTAM System. Work is still ongoing. The biggest problem is getting the private locations into an already overburdened NOTAM System.

ACTION: Mike Webb will report on issue at the next ACF.

MEETING 08-02: Mr. Mike Webb, FAA/AFS-420, provided a brief recap of the issue. The goal is to create location identifiers for heliports and helipads in order to support helicopter operations. The initiative is intended to provide the required NOTAM support to private use heliports and helipads.

(Note: This item also relates to ACF Issue 05-02-177, Identifiers for Copter Point-in-Space procedures. It was decided to combine the two issues into one)

Mr. Mike Webb and Mr. Greg Yamamoto, FAA/NACO, propose to treat point-in-space helicopter procedures using the same method currently used for STARs (establish a 4-character "pseudo heliport" identifier). STARs may serve multiple airports in one geographic area. This solution would serve to reduce the potential total number of NOTAMs that would be duplicated otherwise.

ACTION: Mr. Greg Yamamoto, FAA/NACO, will develop a schema for establishing identifiers.

ACTION: Mr. Mike Webb will get industry input and report on issue at the next ACF.

MEETING 09-01: Mr. Mike Webb, FAA/AFS-420, provided a brief recap of the issue. The goal is to create location identifiers for heliports and helipads in order to support helicopter operations. The initiative is intended to provide the required NOTAM support to private use heliports and helipads. The issue remains open pending formalization of internal FAA agreements.

Note: This item also relates to ACF Issue 05-02-177, Identifiers for Copter Point-in-Space procedures. It was decided at the 08-02 ACF to combine the two issues into one.

ACTION: Mr. Mike Webb will get industry input and report on issue at the next ACF.

MEETING 09-02: Mr. Mike Webb, FAA/AFS-420, was not present. Mr. John Moore said that Mr. Webb would address the issue in the future. Mr. EC Hunnicutt offered to take the issue of Heliport Identifiers back to his office to work.

Note: This item also relates to ACF Issue 05-02-177, Identifiers for Copter Point-in-Space procedures. It was decided at the 08-02 ACF to combine the two issues into one.

ACTION: Mr. Hunnicutt to work the Helicopter Ident Issue at his office.

ACTION: Mr. Mike Webb will report on issue at the next ACF.

MEETING 10-01: *Note: This issue has been combined with 05-02-177.*

Mr. Mike Webb, FAA/AFS-420, reported there was no further update. They are still looking for a long term solution - possibly AGIS involvement.

A working group was assembled (see WG list below). Mr. Marty Heller, FAA-AJR-321, and Mr. Mike Webb, FAA/AFS-420, have agreed to coordinate the WG.

04-01-168 / 05-02-177 Working Group

Name	Organization	Phone #	Email
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ACTION: Mr. Mike Webb and Mr. Martin Heller will report back at the next ACF.

MEETING 10-02

Note: This issue has been combined with 05-02-177.

Issue 04-01-168

Mr. Mike Webb, FAA/AFS-420, has confirmed that a process for identifying Heliports and Helipads is in place; however, Airports still needs to establish its own internal process for implementation.

Mr. Richard Boll, NBAA, inquired if there is a public source to reference the heliports and helipads. Mr. Webb said yes, via the 5010 website (http://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_safety/airportdata_5010).

Issue 05-02-177

Mr. Webb has confirmed that a PinS procedure identifier process is in place. For a procedure with a single destination heliport/helipad, the ID of that location will be used. For a procedure with multiple heliport / helipad destinations, the ID of the airport that supplies altimeter information shall be utilized.

Ms. Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-3B, expressed concern that this may still be hard for a pilot to determine where to go to find possible NOTAMs when referencing an airport ID that is not the same as any of the actual heliports that appear on the chart.

NOTE: This item may be readdressed at a future date.

STATUS: CLOSED