

AREA OF CONCERN 131-1

3/19/08

SAFETY: No

SUBJECT: AFSS Pre-Flight Briefing on SUA

DISCUSSION: This AOC was submitted by AOPA. The contention is that AFSS specialists are only required to provide pilots with a briefing on SUA "Upon request." AOPA suggests that this be changed to a requirement for specialists to provide this information without request and that it be made a mandatory briefing item for flight plan filing. The committee's discussion regarding this proposal was that of the increased workload for AFSS specialists and the actual number of pilots that did not want the information versus those that may have violated SUA because the information was not given. ATPAC agreed to make this suggestion an AOC for tracking purposes and that AOPA would attempt to obtain more definitive information on justification and provide supporting data

SUGGESTED ATPAC ACTION: None

RECOMMENDATION: AOPA will gather data regarding this AOC and present it at #132 for further committee consideration.

132 - The committee could not determine if this is systemic or an individual issue. Mr. Lehman will research for more quantifiable data.

133 - Alan Wilkes spoke about unpublished airspace issues. First, convert all special use info into NOTAM D format. Second, changes to software using FS21 system (Alaska, Oasis) for tags to specific flights. No date of completion. Possibly issue "pointer NOTAMs." Require briefer to ask pilot if he needs more info on special use airspace. Glenn Morse asked about "being tied to a route" asked Alan for clarification. OASIS is almost complete in Alaska for any route (50 mile radius). LMT has some more items to complete. Pete Lehman is still concerned about pilots not receiving data on SUA. He wants at the beginning of the brief to include info on unpublished and published SUA. What places are Pete Lehman talking about specifically? Confusion for published and unpublished SUA, review the phraseology for accuracy. *Alan Wilkes will bring this up at the Flight Service meeting and report at Meeting #134.*

134 - A response from Flight Services was issued in the Pre-read package, and therefore, this issue was not discussed at length during the meeting. Pete Lehman (AOPA) needs to put together a problem definition. As reported by Alan Wilkes (submitted prior to meeting):

I met with the Flight Services Safety and Operations Support Group on November 13, 2008 to discuss the proposal that published Special Use Airspace information be included as mandatory briefing items in a standard weather briefing.

Flight Services remains opposed to the proposal as their contention is that published data (whether it be SUA, airport information, flight procedures or any other information related to flight) remains the responsibility of the pilot. Including published data as a mandatory briefing item is contradictory to the purpose of the U.

S. NOTAMs system, where published data is amended and updated by notices to airmen, which are already mandatory briefing items. There is also a concern about the increased workload that would be placed on the briefer. There are so many sources where published SUA data can be found, for a briefer to go through each source for every briefing would be an unreasonable increase in workload and extend briefing times beyond acceptable levels. Flight Services also indicated there could be liability and possibly contractual issues involved as well.

FAA has recently undertaken several steps to ensure safety of flight in the vicinity of Special Use Airspace. All unpublished MOA, Alert Area and Warning Area data is now NOTAM D criteria. Restricted Area and Aerial Refueling NOTAMs continue to be mandatory briefing items; other types of SUA information are still “upon request” and will remain so until such time the flight services systems can be modified to link SUA information to the route of flight. At that time policy will be modified to make all NOTAMS pertaining to unpublished SUA activity mandatory for briefing.

Flight Services is, however, sympathetic to AOPA’s concern that pilots may not be getting published SUA data that could be pertinent to their flight. As indicated in paragraph 3-2-1 of FAA Order 7110.10, Flight Services, published SUA information remains as “upon request” briefing item, meaning that a pilot can get up to date SUA info by requesting it from the briefer. Flight Services has offered to strengthen the language in the Aeronautical Information Manual to heighten awareness among pilots that published SUA information must be requested. Flight Services would also be willing to work with the publishers of SUA data to include a statement, in an easily noticeable place in the publication that SUA data may be updated periodically and pilots should contact a flight service station for NOTAMS concerning Special Use Airspace.

Alan Wilkes
Procedures Development Group

CURRENT STATUS:

IOU REMAINS OPEN: (AJR-53)