

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
ANCHORAGE AIR ROUTE TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTER (ARTCC)  
700 N. BONIFACE  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99506**

**ISSUED: October 15, 2008**

**EFFECTIVE: October 15, 2008**

**ANCHORAGE ARTCC LETTER TO AIRMEN #08-01**

**SUBJECT: IFR Off airway (direct) routing operations conducted via GPS navigation within the state of Alaska below or beyond FAA surveillance coverage.**

**CANCELLATION: October 14, 2010**

This Letter to Airmen discusses Alaska based air traffic controllers' abilities to assign off airway (direct) routings to pilots operating under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) when utilizing IFR certified Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation equipment within the airspace over the State of Alaska. Nothing in this letter is to be construed so as to alter, contradict or interpret existing FAA regulations and requirements as set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 14 et.al., or in any FAA issued Operating Certificate issued under parts 121, 135, etc. of that Title, or in any other FAA publication. The purpose of this letter is to acquaint Alaskan airmen with the requirements which are levied upon *Air Traffic Controllers* and thereby enhance air operations through a better common understanding of roles and responsibilities between pilots and controllers.

Background - Air Traffic Controllers' actions are regulated by various FAA Orders. Primary among these is FAA Order JO 7110.65, "Air Traffic Control." JO 7110.65 sets forth the limitations under which FAA Controllers may assign routings which are off airway or "direct." One of the most significant limitations is that aircraft which are assigned off airway routings (and which extend beyond the normal service volumes of ground based navigational aides), be provided continuous RADAR or Automatic Dependent Surveillance (ADS) flight following. This is true for traditionally equipped aircraft, i.e. ADF and/or VOR, as well as for Area Navigation (RNAV) equipped aircraft, such as GPS, INS, LORAN, etc. The availability of RADAR and/or ADS surveillance within the State of Alaska is limited. Many airports in western Alaska are beyond surveillance coverage. Due to this limitation, FAA, in certain cases, has removed Air Traffic Controllers' surveillance requirements for IFR aircraft operating in the Alaskan airspace. Previously this was accomplished by issuing Anchorage ARTCC a waiver to certain sections of the JO 7110.65. The contents of the waiver have now been incorporated into JO 7110.65, for Alaskan airspace only, and the waiver has been canceled.

Permitted Operations - Air Traffic Controllers at the Anchorage ARTCC may assign off airway, direct, routings under the following limitations:

1. Aircraft must be equipped with an IFR certified GPS navigation system. (The controller is notified of this when the pilot/dispatcher files equipment suffix code /E, /F, /G, or /R in the IFR flight plan or the pilot communicates this to controllers)
2. Routings must consist of point to point segments. Points must consist of navigation aides, published intersections, airports or waypoints.
3. Points used must be named and depicted on the controller's RADAR video map or on the controller's airspace chart. (All of the named points found on the IFR Enroute High and Low Altitude charts published by the National Aeronautical Charting Office (NACO) are found on the controller's airspace chart. Most named Initial Approach Fixes (IAFs) and named Missed Approach Points (MAPs) for Standard Instrument Approach Procedures (SIAPs) are also printed on the controller's airspace chart.)
4. The maximum allowable distance between points is 512 nautical miles.
5. Altitudes assigned must be at or above the minimum assignable IFR altitude (MIA) for the route segment, including the protected airspace of that route segment.
6. The lateral protected airspace, i.e. that airspace either side of route centerline which is to be protected for terrain, is 4 nautical miles either side of centerline.

*Note: It is important to highlight #2 and #3. Lat/longs or fixed-radial-distance locations do not qualify under these provision.*

Operational Impact - The incorporation of these procedures into the JO 7110.65 order will continue to provide Alaskan Air Traffic Controllers the capability to provide expeditious routings. Operators with appropriate navigation equipment may wish to consider this capability when conducting flight planning operations and especially when considering "Pop up" IFR clearance requests. Pilots should understand that controllers' ability to issue off airway routings, beyond useable navigational aide distances, and below or beyond FAA surveillance is strictly limited to the conditions noted above.

Questions and Comments – Questions or comments concerning the topic covered in the Letter to Airmen may be directed to Mr. John Jordan, Support Manager for Airspace and Procedures, Anchorage ARTCC at either (907)-269-2730 or via email to: john.jordan@faa.gov.



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