

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

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ANCHORAGE ARTCC LETTER TO AIRMEN #11-1

SUBJECT: IFR Global Position System point-to-point navigation within the state of Alaska below or beyond FAA surveillance coverage.

CANCELLATION: November 7, 2013

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 pilots 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 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 must be provided continuous RADAR or Automatic Dependent Surveillance (ADS) flight following. The availability of RADAR and/or ADS surveillance within the State of Alaska is limited. Due to this limitation, FAA, in certain cases, has removed surveillance requirements for IFR aircraft operating in the Alaskan airspace.

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. Routes must consist of named points. Points are defined as: navigation aids, published intersections, airports or waypoints.

3. Points used must be named and depicted on the controller's RADAR display or on the controller's airspace chart. (All of the named points on the IFR Enroute High and Low Altitude charts published by the AeroNav Products Office are found on the controller's airspace chart. Most named Initial Approach Fixes (IAFs) and named missed approach fixes 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 highest minimum IFR altitude (MIA) along the projected route, 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 provisions.

What's changed? In the past pilots were told that in order for air traffic controllers to accommodate a request for a direct routing, the pilot must be established over a named point. A recent clarification of this procedure now allows air traffic controllers to issue a clearance if the pilot verifies he/she is established between two named points. Example: Established on a route between Bethel and Emmonak.

Additionally, altitude assignments are no longer based on the highest minimum IFR altitude (MIA) along the projected route. Controllers may now use varying altitudes based on MIAs along a route segment with crossing restrictions as appropriate.

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



Bob Watkins
Air Traffic Manager
Anchorage ARTCC