

**Instrument Procedures Group
Meeting 20-02 – Oct 27, 2020**

RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

FAA Control # 20-02-353

Subject: Revised Guidance & Charting for Order 8260.3 Circling Area Dimensions

Background/Discussion: This is a proposed revision to previously accepted guidance from closed [ACF CG issue 09-01-213](#), which is linked for your review.

Order 8260.3B, Chg. 21 revised the circling approach obstacle evaluation area (OEA) dimensions to be variable based on airport elevation and circling minimum descent altitude (CMDA). The intent was that all procedures in the National Airspace System (NAS) with circling minimums would be revised to apply these new areas.

As each procedure was revised, an icon with a white “C” on a black field (hereafter referred to as a circling icon) would be added to the chart to alert the pilot that the new criteria had been applied. An expanded Chart Notice explaining the circling icon and revised Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) guidance were published. The first revised procedure was charted in early 2013. Considering the magnitude of the effort, it has taken longer than anticipated to complete the work. Accordingly, Flight Standards (FS), Flight Inspection (FI), and Aeronautical Information Services (AIS) began collaborating in early 2019 to develop a "get well" plan to include establishing implementation priorities.

By early 2020, amendments at most high priority airports were finished and we were on track for completing the remainder per the plan. However, FI operations have now been unexpectedly reduced due to the unprecedented global pandemic. In order to continue to focus on the highest risks while reaching a final resolution considering the resources available, AIS, FI, and FS have modified the implementation strategy:

- AIS will revise the remaining procedures and will issue P-NOTAMs with new minimums as necessary.
- FI will complete validation of new circling areas, as they are able to do so.
- Since the procedures will be amended by P-NOTAM (with CMDAs increased as necessary) before FI has validated the revised circling areas, those procedures will be charted without the circling icon.
- Once all remaining procedures have been revised and validated, the circling icon will be removed from all approach plates.
- FS will initiate an update to the AIM to remove references to the circling icon and all references to the legacy circling evaluation area dimensions.
- FS will update the Instrument Procedures Handbook (IPH) to remove all references to the legacy circling evaluation area dimensions.
- FS will revise Order 8260.19 to remove the requirement to “chart circling icon.”
- AIS will update the Terminal Procedures Publication (TPP) front matter to remove references to the circling icon and all references to the legacy circling evaluation area dimensions.

FS believes there is no negative impact on safety in *not* charting the circling icon, as the procedures will have been evaluated with the larger areas, and the CMDAs increased if necessary. The pilots' understanding *without* the circling icon is that they should operate utilizing the smaller legacy maneuvering areas. While they may encounter some increased CMDAs, since they are operating to circling minimums, they will be able to maneuver to lose additional altitude if necessary.

Recommendations: FS, AIS, and FI recommend from this point forward, revised procedures (with CMDAs increased where necessary) will be charted without the circling icon. We also recommend once the final procedures have been revised and validated, the circling icon will be removed from all approach plates, roughly concurrent with the attendant changes to the AIM and IPH.

Comments:

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Initial meeting 20-02: Jeff Rawdon, FAA Flight Procedures and Airspace Group (FPAG), briefed the issue from the [slides](#). Rich Boll, NBAA, asked about a timeline on the completion strategy for the remaining procedures, Jeff said this is still being evaluated. Johnnie Baker, FAA Aeronautical Information Services (AIS), said there are about 1,460 procedures left, and he anticipates AIS having all these evaluated around July 2021 but no later than October 31, 2021. Flight Inspection will keep working these as they can. Valerie Watson, AIS, advised they have to chart what is on the form, and these are published under authority of part 97, so removing the circling icons will require docket action. Valerie suggested if procedures are revised due to an increase in minimum circling altitudes via P-NOTAM, the circling icon should be added for consistency. TJ Nichols, FPAG, said the problem is Flight Inspection (FI) views charting the Icon as a separate action requiring flight validation, and FI resources are operationally limited at the moment due to the pandemic. The intent is to get all of the remaining procedures evaluated, and add higher minimums where required, while working within the limitations of the FI schedule. Rich Boll, NBAA, discussed issues for the pilots without the circling icon, and added Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) guidance was recently changed on approach category

speeds. He would like an evaluation on how many of the remaining procedures would see an increase in minimums. Rich thinks the modification of minimums as required is more important than dimensions. TJ expressed the higher altitude airports were already prioritized first, and mostly lower altitude airports are left. Johnnie concurred that mostly smaller airports are left, and FI will prioritize validations from the list of revised procedures. Andrew Lewis, Garmin, asked how many cycles the ultimate removal of the circling icons would take, and Valerie Watson said the charting team can do 350 P-NOTAMS per 56-day publication cycle. *(Editorial note: after the meeting, AIS provided the information that there are currently 5,104 charts with the circling icon, and likely some additional projects in the workflow that would add the circling icon. They anticipate removal of icons from approximately 1,000 charts each 56-day cycle, so are estimating removal of all circling icons could be accomplished in six cycles.)* Andrew asked that he be kept apprised of developments and FPAG will work out details on how to accomplish that.

Action Items:

- Flight Procedures and Airspace Group will brief progress on evaluation and validation of the remaining 1,462 procedures.
- Flight Procedures and Airspace Group will determine a means to keep the data and chart providers informed on the process.

Status: Item open.
