



Federal Aviation Administration

Memorandum

Date: **MAR 16 2012**

To: Chas. Frederic Anderson, Director, Aeronautical Products, ^{AJV-3}

From: Leslie H. Smith, Manager, Flight Technologies and Procedures Division, ^{for} AFS-400

Subject: Special Helicopter Departure Procedures

The Flight Procedure Implementation and Oversight Branch recently conducted a Technical Review Board (TRB) to discuss the current process for operational approval of helicopter departure procedures. The existing process was found to harbor issues associated with the documentation, maintenance and navigation database coding of these procedures.

Special helicopter approach procedures submitted to AFS-400 for approval have historically contained a departure chart but no corresponding source documentation (FAA Form 8260-15). Once the approach procedure was approved, the departure chart was provided to the operator, often included in their Operations Specifications. As the number of Special Copter procedures has increased over the past few years, a need to develop and maintain these departure procedures as stand-alone procedures has been recognized. This action will afford all copter procedures with the level of safety required by ensuring continual maintenance and review of the procedures. Additionally, the FAA-approved source document for the departure procedure will provide coding organizations the documentation necessary to update navigation databases. Without this coding, the departure procedure would not be retrievable from the aircraft's navigation database as specified in Advisory Circular 90-100A, U.S. Terminal and En Route Area Navigation (RNAV) Operations.

We have determined it necessary to implement a new process in order to maintain the safety and integrity of all special helicopter departure procedures. The phased-in process outlined below is to be followed for the development and implementation of all Special Helicopter Instrument Approach/Departure Procedures.

1. Procedure Developer/Maintenance Providers must conduct a departure assessment in accordance with existing guidance for all locations with Copter approach procedures.
 - a. Approach procedures developed prior to January 1, 2012, must have a departure assessment and the appropriate documentation submitted to AFS-400 for approval within two years from the date of this memorandum. If this action is not

accomplished within the two year period, the maintainer of the procedure(s) shall issue a NOTAM on the procedure stating "IFR Departure NA".

- b. Approach procedures developed after January 1, 2012, must have a departure assessment and the appropriate documentation submitted to AFS-400 for approval.
2. Departure procedures submitted for AFS-400 approval must be a stand-alone procedure package. The departure package will include FAA Form 8260-15A and may include FAA Forms 8260-15B and 8260-15C, along with all other required supporting documentation.
3. Procedure developers may use any AFS-approved criteria for the departure assessment.

Please contact Mr. Danny Hamilton, Manager, Flight Procedure Implementation and Oversight Branch, at (405) 954-9359, if you have any questions.