



Federal Aviation Administration

Memorandum

Date: SEP 26 2014

To: Abigail Smith, Director, Aeronautical Navigation Products, AJV-3

From: Bruce DeCleene, Manager, Flight Technologies and Procedures Division,
AFS-400

Subject: "Top Altitude" Interim Guidance

PURPOSE: This memorandum provides interim guidance to be used in conjunction with FAA Order 8260.46E, Departure Procedure (DP) Program in support of the Air Traffic Organization (ATO) implementation of "Climb Via" phraseology that requires a "Top Altitude" be depicted on Standard Instrument Departure (SID) charts. "Top Altitude" is defined in the pilot-controller glossary as: "In reference to SID published altitude restrictions, the phrase 'maintain' altitude contained in the procedure description or assigned by ATC."

BACKGROUND: The implementation of "Climb Via" phraseology highlighted a need for consistent implementation of "Top Altitudes" on departure procedures due to several instances of confusion relating to altitude restrictions placed on departures. The Aeronautical Charting Forum and the Climb Via Work Group, comprised of representatives from Air Traffic Organization, Flight Standards Service, and Industry stakeholders developed the recommendations below to aid in this effort.

ACTION: The interim guidance listed below may be used in conjunction with Order 8260.46E:

- a. ATC must provide the procedure developer "Top Altitude(s)" for the SIDs they will use when applying pilot/controller "Climb Via" phraseology. The "Top Altitude" must be obtained directly from the applicable controlling ATC Facility, the Service Area Flight Procedures Team (FPT), or as provided on the Graphic Departure Procedure (DP) Requirements Worksheet.
- b. The "Top Altitude" should be the highest altitude on the SID, including transitions. If no "Top Altitude" is specified by ATC, see paragraph f.
- c. No more than two "Top Altitudes" are allowed per procedure. The maximum of two different altitudes may be used in a manner to support different aircraft types (i.e., turbo-jet and propeller driven).
- d. Enter the "Top Altitude(s)" provided by ATC on Form 8260-15B for all SIDs. See examples provided below.
- e. A "Top Altitude" is not coded as part of the departure procedure and will not appear on Form 8260-15C, Departure (Data Record).

- f. ATC may elect to not publish a specific "Top Altitude," preferring to issue the "Top Altitude" as part of the ATC clearance. When this occurs, ATC will request the "Top Altitude" information be stated as "assigned by ATC." See variations permitted in the examples provided below.
- g. For multiple airports using the same SID, include the airport names and/or specific runways when "Top Altitudes" differ between airports and/or runways.
- h. Examples are as noted below:

1. CHART: TOP ALTITUDE: 16000,

or,

CHART: TOP ALTITUDE RWY 8/25/34L/34R/35L/35R: 16000; RWY 16L/16R/17L/17R: 12000,

or,

CHART: TOP ALTITUDE: STEVE AND DANNO TRANSITIONS: FL230 C INHO AND KONOHI TRANSITIONS: FL180

or,

CHART: TOP ALTITUDE: ASSIGNED BY ATC.

- 2. For multiple airports using the same SID, include the airport names and/or specific runways when "Top Altitudes" differ between airports and/or specific runways:

Starship Muni - CHART: TOP ALTITUDE: 16000

Anywhere Intl - CHART: TOP ALTITUDE RWY 8/25/34L/34R/35L/35R: 16000;
RWY 16L/16R/17L/17R: 12000.

Mayfair Metro - CHART: TOP ALTITUDE 12000.

- 3. If all airports share a common "Top Altitude," then state as such:

All Airports - CHART: TOP ALTITUDE: 12000.

- 4. For cases where there will be a need for a different "Top Altitude," one for turbo-jet aircraft and another for propeller driven aircraft:

CHART: TOP ALTITUDE: (JETS) 7000/(PROPS) 2000.

Note: Since no more than two "Top Altitudes" are allowed per procedure, applying the paragraph 4 option cannot be combined with other conditions.

SUMMARY: This interim guidance will be reviewed for incorporation into a future change to Order 8260.46E. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Rick Dunham, Manager, Flight Procedure Standards Branch, AFS-420, at (405) 954-4164.