

**AERONAUTICAL CHARTING FORUM  
Charting Group  
RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT**

**FAA Control # (11-01-235)**

**Subject:**

The use of the notation "RP\*" in the airport data field on VFR Sectional charts.

**Background/Discussion:**

"RP\*" appears if one or more runways have other than standard traffic. Pilots should reference the A/FD for specific information.

This item was previously submitted November 2006 and March 2009. The response from those submissions was that, "this is a pilot education issue."

Having presented and many safety seminars, the pilots still do not know this information. It isn't intuitive. Some pilots will see "RP\*" and know that they should look up the information. Other pilots will see it and assume the airport has right traffic. Thus the local based pilots will fly standard left traffic and transients who don't understand will fly right traffic creating a substantial hazard.

I would challenge you to go into any room full of pilots and ask the question, "What does "RP\*" mean on the chart? 99% of the pilots will get it wrong, be they private, commercial, CFI, or ATPs. Pilots don't know this. If this is a "pilot education issue" what exactly has the FAA done to correct this?

**Recommendations:**

The use of "RP\*" on VFR sectional charts should be discontinued.

This is so dangerous, that we have eliminated the three sites in which RP\* appeared in Michigan (Green Bay, Lake Huron, Chicago, and Detroit Sectionals. We accomplished that by removing the information from the A/FD that would trigger the notation on the charts. This would be a remark such as, "Helicopters may be using right traffic" or "Gliders fly right traffic." Because we are a data source for the A/FD, we are able to have those remarks removed from the A/FD. When the "RP\*" appears due to a notation for helicopters using right traffic, it should be noted that helicopters are by regulation, supposed to avoid fixed wing traffic. (see FAR 91.126 Operating on or in the vicinity of an airport in Class G airspace. "(b) (2) Each pilot of a helicopter or a powered parachute must avoid the flow of fixed-wing aircraft.") This was the case at Charlotte MI.

There is no problem with notations such as "RP 18" or "RP 24." Pilots understand that. What they don't understand is "RP\*."

**Comments:** This recommendation affects increased safety by avoiding a situation where we have aircraft flying towards each other in airport traffic patterns.

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**MEETING 11-01:** Mr. Randy Coller, Michigan DOT, was not able to attend the ACF, so Mr. Henry Felices, FAA/AAS-100, briefed the issue. Mr. Coller states that pilots are misunderstanding the RP\* as meaning that RPs exist at all runways, instead of the correct interpretation that they should consult the A/FD for RP information. He noted that there were no problems with pilots understanding RP 18 as Right Pattern for runway 18.

Mr. John Moore, FAA/AJV-3B, reviewed the current use and intended use of the RP\* on FAA VFR charts. Mr. Moore noted that the FAA utilizes the \* symbol on both VFR and Instrument Enroute Charts as an established convention to indicate to a chart user to refer to the A/FD.

Mr. Moore commented that, in his opinion, this is more a pilot education issue than a charting issue, but that the FAA should look at their education efforts. He also noted that the RP remarks in the A/FD should be reviewed for criteria and applicability.

Mr. Ron Haag, FAA/AJV-321, stated that the FAA Aeronautical Chart User's Guide was in the process of being rewritten and expanded and that a new section on RP could be included in the next version.

**ACTION:** Ms. Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-3B, will check the AIM to determine what is currently included for guidance and report back at the next ACF.

**ACTION:** Mr. Ron Haag, FAA/AJV-321, will review what is currently published in the Chart Users Guide and will report back at the next ACF on suggested changes to the information to be published in the new edition.

**ACTION:** Mr. Henry Felices, FAA/AAS-100, will provide Mr. Rick Fecht, FAA/AJV-321, information on the number of RP\*s charted, at which airports and their associated remarks in the A/FD. Mr. Fecht will review the remarks for applicability and report back at the next ACF.

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**MEETING 11-02:** Mr. Ron Haag, FAA/AJV-321, [provided an update](#) of progress made since last ACF. Mr. Haag stated that a new explanation was being included in the 2012

edition of the Chart User Guide (scheduled for release January 2012) and new wording is also going in to the AIM. Mr. Haag commented that an explanation may also be added to the FAA FAQ's web site.

New explanatory text will read as follows:

“Right traffic information is shown using the abbreviation “RP” for right pattern, followed by the appropriate runway number(s). Special conditions or restrictions to the right pattern are indicated by the use of an asterisk (RP\*) to direct the pilot to the Airport/Facility Directory for special instruction and/or restrictions.”

Mr. Haag added that in a review of all airports where RP\* is charted; only 50 airports were found. Of those, over half were due to helicopters/ultralights/gliders traffic pattern/operations at those airports.

**STATUS: OPEN**

**ACTION:** Mr. Ron Haag, FAA/AJV-321, to report back at next ACF.

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**MEETING 12-01:** Mr. Ron Haag, FAA/AJV-321, provided an update of the progress made since last ACF. He stated that explanatory text had been published in the 2012 Chart Users Guide, on the FAA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Homepage and in the AIM. It is hoped that with better user understanding of the charting convention, the confusion associated with the interpretation of this chart attribute will be resolved.

**STATUS: CLOSED**