

AERONAUTICAL CHARTING MEETING
Charting Group
Meeting 18-01 – April 25–26, 2018

RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

FAA Control #18-01-323

Subject: Standardizing Labeling of Parking Areas on Airport Diagrams

Background/Discussion:

The FAA develops Airport Diagrams to assist pilots navigating the surface of an airport. These charts are provided for all towered airports and select non-towered airports in accordance with JO 7910.4. For those airports with an Airport Diagram, the FAA charts the symbols and labels of parking areas and facilities located at that airport in “sufficient detail to facilitate visual orientation of aircraft while parked or taxiing” (IAC 4, Section 3.6.1). Authorized sources for parking and facility information include:

- AAS-100: Airport Engineering
- Airport District Office
- Airport Sponsor (e.g., Airport Manager, Airport Owner, Official Airport Engineering Consulting Firm)
- State Department of Aviation or Department of Transportation
- Air Traffic Control Tower manager

The FAA’s charting specification, IAC 4, for parking areas is vague as to how the cartographer should label these locations:

3.6.2.2.10.6 Parking areas and ramps; e.g., South, ANG, USN.

Essentially, the cartographer is obligated to chart what they are provided from the authorized source. In many cases, it is the airport sponsor who is volunteering this information. The requirement to accept what the airport sponsor has provided, with no vetting, has resulted in inconsistency and pilot confusion. In the last year, AOPA has collected over a thousand reports from General Aviation pilots concerned about transparency of airport and FBO services being provided at an airport. Many of these reports specifically note that the Airport Diagram needs to be consistent and standardize parking definitions.

Adjacent airports may use the same label for a parking area, such as “GA Parking,” but have a dissimilar meaning. For Airport Diagrams to be effective there must be standardization. As an example, the following terms can be found on current Airport Diagrams, and each term has a different definition depending on the airport. It is impractical for a pilot to determine the meaning of the parking label using the Airport Diagram as the only context.

Examples of General Aviation Parking Labels		
FBO	General Aviation	Ramp Office General Aviation Terminal
FBO Facilities Transient Parking	General Aviation Apron	Terminal/FBO
FBO General Aviation Ramp	General Aviation Parking	Tiedown
FBO Hangar	General Aviation Ramp	Tie-Down Apron
FBO Ramp	General Aviation Terminal	Transient Aircraft Parking
FBO/Transient Parking Overnight	General Aviation Terminal/FBO	Transient GA Parking/FBO
G.A. Apron	Itinerant Parking	Transient Parking
GA Apron	Main Apron	Transient Parking Short Term (Singles)
GA Parking	Parking and Tie-Down Apron	Transient Tiedowns
GA Terminal and Parking	Ramp	

There can be a variety of facilities on an airport (e.g., USCG, Flight School, etc.) and unique features (e.g., North Ramp, Transient Parking, etc.) that cannot be comprehensively accounted for in a single national list. A single list would be too limiting and impact the flexibility that is necessary for airports. However, clear definitions for a limited number of frequently used terms could facilitate basic standardization, account for the majority of uses, and provide clarity for the chart user. Providing a definition and charting specification for a shortened list of terms should not limit the flexibility afforded to the airport sponsor.

Recommendations:

To resolve the inconsistent use of parking terms and to clearly communicate the type of parking available to pilots, FAA charting should:

- Define in IAC specifications the common Airport Diagram parking area terms, as proposed below.
- Update FAA Order JO 7910.4 to inform FAA authorized sources of these definitions.
- Update Chart Users Guide, TPP, Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG), and other relevant guidance to inform pilots of these definitions.

To promote standardization, we recommend the IAC Airport Diagram parking and ramp specification list a limited number of commonly used terms and their definitions. This list of terms would promote airport sponsors and the FAA using consistent and clear terms, while assisting pilots with navigation. Below is the proposed change to the IAC specification.

3.6.2.2.10.6 Parking areas and ramps; e.g., South, ANG, USN.

Individual parking areas, ramps, aprons, etc. should be labeled as defined by the source and in accordance with, to the extent practical, the following definitions (it is acceptable for a ramp to meet more than one definition and to be depicted using more than one label).

ALTERNATIVE ACCESS RAMP — A ramp area administered by the airport sponsor or a non-commercial entity where itinerant operators can park their aircraft.

FBO RAMP — A ramp area administered by the FBO or other commercial entity where operators can park their aircraft. No individual commercial names should appear on the government diagrams.

GENERAL AVIATION RAMP — A ramp area that defines an area of permanent parking for resident general aviation aircraft, i.e., tie-down area.

For purposes of this section, “apron” or “ramp” is a defined area on an airport or heliport intended to accommodate aircraft for purposes of loading or unloading passengers or cargo, refueling, parking, or maintenance. With regard to seaplanes, a ramp is used for access to the apron from the water.

Comments:

In combination with this effort, AOPA is advocating with FAA Office of Airports to update their relevant guidance to detail these same parking definitions and to encourage airport sponsors to update their Airport Diagrams to conform to these standards.

Submitted by: Rune Duke

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Date: April 2, 2018

MEETING 18-01

Rune Duke, AOPA, [briefed the RD](#). Rune explained the problems pilots encounter as a result of inconsistent labeling of parking area on Airport Diagrams. He briefed that the current process is to chart/label parking areas as provided by authorized source, which has resulted in numerous label types and little standardization with respect to how the areas are to be used. Rune’s proposal involves standardizing parking/ramp areas as follows (See slide #5):

- **ALTERNATIVE ACCESS RAMP** - A ramp area administered by the airport sponsor or a non-commercial entity where itinerant operators can park their aircraft.
- **FBO RAMP** - A ramp area administered by the FBO or other commercial entity where operators can park their aircraft. No individual commercial names should appear on the government diagrams.
- **GENERAL AVIATION RAMP** - A ramp area that defines an area of permanent parking for resident general aviation aircraft, i.e., tie-down area.

Rune recommends that these definitions be added to the Interagency Air Committee (IAC) Specifications for Airport Diagrams to ensure that these are the only parking labels that can be charted on Airport Diagrams. He further recommends that these definitions/labels be described

in the Chart User's Guide, the Pilot Controller Glossary (PCG) and any Office of Airports ACs, Orders or relevant guidance documents.

Lt. Col. Turner, USAF, expressed concerns for added confusion while this changeover to the new terms is taking place. Rune agreed that it may be confusing in the short-term, but over time the benefit would outweigh any confusion encountered during the transition period. Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-553, commented that if this change is approved and is incorporated into the IAC specifications, the FAA would implement the change on a day forward basis and that over time, the charts would be updated to the new language.

Valerie explained that she is not be able to propose changes to the charting specifications until the definitions in the guidance are updated first. She suggested the Office of Airports would be the place to start this process. Rune said the he has been in discussions with the Office of Airports and was told that the guidance must be published in the IAC Specifications, and the definitions in the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) and/or the Pilot Controller Glossary (PCG) before the Office of Airports can make any changes to their documentation. Valerie voiced that in her belief the Office of Airports could and should initiate this process, but said that she would work with Rune to add the definitions of the terms to the PCG. Once that is accomplished, she will begin work to revise the Airport Diagram specifications to support the use of those terms and initiate changes to the Chart User's Guide. Once those definitions are in place, the AJV-5 Airport Mapping Team will devise internal processes for contacting airports to ensure use of the new terms. After all that is accomplished, she assumes the Office of Airports will do their part to ensure data collection utilizing the newly sanctioned terminology.

Valerie expressed concern over how much chart space the proposed text would take up and asked Rune if he was amenable to shortening the proposed terms by using abbreviations. She suggested that GENERAL AVIATION RAMP be shortened to GA RAMP and ALTERNATIVE ACCESS RAMP to ALT ACCESS RAMP. Rune agreed.

Valerie asked the audience if they agree with the definitions that Rune is proposing. There was some discussion of the terms and suggestions of alternatives, however, Rune explained that he had to find terms that are unique and these were the most accepted terms that he was able to come up with. Ted Thompson, Jeppesen, voiced his support, stating that shortening the names would be helpful, but cautioned that consideration should be given to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) abbreviations that are already in use. Lynette Jamison, FAA/AJR-B11, echoed that concern as related to the potential generation of NOTAMs for these parking areas.

John Bordy, FAA/AFS-420, suggested that these new definitions be coordinated with Air Traffic, FAA/AJV-8, to ensure there will not be unintended consequences with pilot/controller communications. Rune stated that Air Traffic will be part of the AIM Document Change Proposal (DCP) process for adding these terms to the PCG, so they will have to opportunity to review the proposal.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-553, and Rune Duke, AOPA, will submit the new parking area definitions for publication in the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) and the Pilot Controller Glossary (PCG).

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-553, and Rune Duke, AOPA, will coordinate with the Office of Airports to update their relevant documents after the guidance in the AIM and PCG has been published.

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-553, will revise the IAC specifications and the Chart Users' Guide after the publication of the AIM and PCG guidance and after the Office of Airport has updated their guidance.

ACTION: Scott Jerdan, FAA/AJV-533, will work to revise the 7900.2 to support collection of parking areas on airports using these terms after the above have been accomplished.

MEETING 18-02

Rune Duke, AOPA, [provided a review of the topic](#). He reminded the audience of the standardized terms agreed to for parking/ramp areas on airport diagrams at the prior ACM: GA Ramp, FBO Ramp, and ALTN Access Ramp. He said that in order for this change to happen, the first step is for the FAA Office of Airports to adopt these terms in their relevant documents, possibly including but not limited to AC 150/5300-19, Airport Data and Information Program. Once sanctioned and documented by the Office of Airports, the terms can be submitted for publication in the Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG) of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) and the charting specifications can be revised. He has so far been unable to engage the Office of Airports to agreeing to the use and documentation of these designations and there were no representatives of that office present. Rune briefed that because this is a high priority issue for the aviation industry, AOPA, along with others in the aviation community, have [submitted a letter to the FAA](#) Administrator asking for support. Rune also shared a [letter of Congressional support](#) for this issue.

Rune stated that he will continue to work with the Office of Airports in an attempt to have the relevant Airports documents updated.

Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-553, reviewed the four action items from the last ACM. She said that they will all remain as actions, however they are all dependent upon action first being taken by the Office of Airports. Scott Jerdan, FAA/AJV-533, said that the last action item regarding the collection of parking area labels should be revised to the Airport Mapping Team because the National Flight Data Center (NFDC) does not collect this data.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-553, and Rune Duke, AOPA, will continue to coordinate with the Office of Airports to sanction use of the proposed terms and update their relevant documents.

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-553, and Rune Duke, AOPA, will submit the new parking area definitions for publication in the Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG) of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) and once the Office of Airports has updated their guidance.

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-553, will revise the Interagency Air Committee (IAC) Specifications and the Chart User's Guide after the new parking area definitions have

been published in the Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG) of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM).

ACTION: The Airport Mapping Team, FAA/AJV-5640, will research possible outreach to airport proponents in collecting the standardized airport diagram parking area terms after the above steps have been accomplished.

MEETING 19-01

Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, reviewed the issue. Rune Duke, AOPA, stated that he is in continuing discussions with the Office of Airports and others and feels that progress is being made toward solving this issue. He briefed that letters have been sent by AOPA to FAA executives and that there has been Congressional interest in the issue. He is expecting a conclusion by the next ACM meeting.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Rune Duke, AOPA, will continue to coordinate with the Office of Airports to sanction use of the proposed terms and update their relevant guidance/documents.

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, and Rune Duke, AOPA, will submit the new parking area definitions for publication in the Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG) of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) after the Office of Airports has updated their documentation to support them.

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, will revise the Interagency Air Committee (IAC) Specifications and the Chart User's Guide after the new parking area definitions have been published in the Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG) of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM).

ACTION: The Airport Mapping Team, FAA/AJV-A240, will research possible outreach to airport proponents in collecting the standardized airport diagram parking area terms after the above steps have been accomplished.

MEETING 19-02

Rune Duke, AOPA, provided an update. He said that AOPA has recently met with the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) and Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA) regarding standardized terms for parking/ramp areas on airport diagrams. He said he is awaiting their written concurrence. Once written documentation of their support has been obtained, AOPA will again meet with the FAA Office of Airports to further the issue.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Rune Duke, AOPA, will continue to coordinate with the Office of Airports to sanction use of the proposed terms and update their relevant guidance/documents.

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, and Rune Duke, AOPA, will submit the new parking area definitions for publication in the Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG) of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) after the Office of Airports has updated their documentation to support them.

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, will revise the Interagency Air Committee (IAC) Specifications and the Chart User's Guide after the new parking area definitions have been published in the Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG) of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM).

ACTION: The Airport Mapping Team, FAA/AJV-A240, will research possible outreach to airport proponents in collecting the standardized airport diagram parking area terms after the above steps have been accomplished.

MEETING 20-02

Samer Massarueh, FAA/AJV-A221, reviewed the issue. Jim McClay, AOPA, reported that the proposed terms for parking/ramp areas have changed slightly since the original proposal. He said AOPA has been working with the Office of Airports and the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) and have since received consensus on the following four terms and definitions:

FBO RAMP – An apron administered by a fixed base operator where fuel, parking and other related services may be offered to general aviation aircraft operators subject to terms and conditions.

GA TRANSIENT RAMP – An apron not administered by a fixed base operator where itinerant, general aviation operators can park their aircraft subject to terms and conditions (i.e. fees, security requirements, limitations on services offered).

GA TENANT RAMP – An area designated for parking of permanently based general aviation aircraft, i.e. tie-down area.

CBP RAMP – An area to temporarily accommodate arriving international general aviation aircraft requiring inspection by U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel.

Jim said they are getting positive feedback from airports and have already seen over 50 airports that have voluntarily updated the labels used on their airport diagrams. He said the next step will be to go back to the Office of Airports with the updated terms.

Chris Criswell, FAA/AAS-120, stated that the Office of Airports expressed concern about how they will determine what these areas are and whether or not they are identified appropriately with corresponding markings and signage. Chris asked Jim if they have a letter of concurrence for these terms that he can share with the Office of Airports and asked if AAAE was part of that concurrence. Jim said that AAAE was part of that and he will provide the letter after the meeting.

Valerie said that this issue will be left open for AOPA to report back on their communications with the Office of Airports.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Jim McClay, AOPA, will continue to coordinate with the Office of Airports to sanction use of the proposed terms and update their relevant guidance/documents.

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, and Jim McClay, AOPA, will submit the new parking area definitions for publication in the Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG) of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) after the Office of Airports has updated their documentation to support them.

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, will revise the Interagency Air Committee (IAC) Specifications and the Chart Users' Guide after the new parking area definitions have been published in the Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG) of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM).

ACTION: The Airport Mapping Team, FAA/AJV-A240, will research possible outreach to airport proponents in collecting the standardized airport diagram parking area terms after the above steps have been accomplished.

MEETING 21-01

Samer Massarueh, FAA/AJV-A223, reviewed the issue. Jim McClay, AOPA, said there have been some changes since last ACM. He stated that consensus has been reached with Airports Council International (ACI) and American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) on three standardized parking designations.

FBO Ramp - An apron where itinerant general aviation operators can park their aircraft and expect to have access to traditional FBO services subject to terms and conditions.

GA Transient Ramp - An apron where itinerant general aviation operators can park their aircraft without FBO services and subject to terms and conditions.

GA Tenant Ramp - An area designated for parking of based general aviation aircraft, i.e. tiedown area.

Jim said that at this point they are moving forward with a voluntary adoption process. He said AOPA is working with pilot and aviation organizations and, to date, they have had over 20 airports voluntarily adopt these new terms.

Lynette McSpadden, FAA/AJR-B3, suggested that Jim bring a sample airport that has adopted the new terms to the next ACM.

Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, explained that the Office of Airports has not yet been able to sanction these terms and update their relevant guidance and documentation. As a result, these terms are not yet published in the Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG) of the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM). Jim said the Office of Airports wants to first make sure there is industry consensus on how these terms should be used. A decision needs to be made on whether or not the FAA should impose them as a standard before the Office of Airports updates their guidance. Until then, use of the terms will remain voluntary.

Valerie said this issue will remain open while AOPA continues to work on getting full concurrence from industry.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Jim McClay, AOPA, will continue to coordinate with industry and the Office of Airports to sanction use of the proposed terms and update their relevant guidance/documents.

MEETING 21-02

Samer Massarueh, FAA/AJV-A223, reviewed the issue. Jim McClay, AOPA, [briefed](#) that AOPA's airports team is encouraging the voluntary adoption of the ACM-supported airport diagram labels. Of the airports they have contacted, about 80 have or are in the process of updating their labels to comply. Jim showed examples of the three airport diagrams that have incorporated the new terms. He said though there is general consensus on use of the terms, there is not agreement that FAA can or should impose use of them as a standard. He said the Office of Airports wants to first make sure there is industry concurrence on the new terms and that there is widespread use of the terms before they move forward with sanctioning them. In the meantime, AOPA will continue to encourage voluntary adoption. Jim would like to keep the recommendation open at least until the April meeting to see if any progress can be made with the Office of Airports. Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, agreed that this recommendation can remain open until the next ACM.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Jim McClay, AOPA, will continue to coordinate with industry and the Office of Airports to sanction use of the proposed terms and update their relevant guidance/documents. He will report back at the next ACM.

MEETING 22-01

Jim McClay, AOPA, reported that not much has changed since the last ACM. AOPA is continuing to encourage airports to adopt the ACM-supported terms voluntarily, and a few more airports have, but in order to get wider adoption they need the FAA to standardize the terms. Jim reported that the FAA Office of Airports said the decision to standardize the terms is not in their purview. They said the labels need to be adopted in the Interagency Air Committee (IAC) Specifications first, but in order to do that the terms need to be added to the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) and it is unclear how to make that happen. Jim said AOPA would like to keep this item open at least until the next ACM to see if the FAA can find a way forward.

Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, agreed that the only way to mandate use of these parking terms in IAC 4 is to first get them added to the AIM. Valerie said she and Rune Duke, FAA/AFS-001, requested the terms be added to the AIM a few years ago, but the AIM office would not accept them unless the Office of Airports first sanctioned them. The AIM Office explained that FAA Charting offices are not authorized to create standardized terminology for airports and that responsibility rests with the Office of Airports. Unfortunately, the Office of Airports was not in attendance during this discussion. Valerie expressed her frustration that what seems a simple

and useful standardization of airport terminology that has overwhelming pilot support should be so difficult to accomplish. She said she is willing to leave the issue open, but said they will need cooperation from the Office of Airports. She said she would work with Jim on that effort.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, and Jim McClay, AOPA, will continue to coordinate with the Office of Airports to sanction use of the proposed terms and to update relevant guidance/documents.

MEETING 22-02

Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, reported that she reached out to the Office of Airports to again ask if they will consider sanctioning the use of the proposed terms. The issue was forwarded to Mike Rottinghaus, FAA/AAS-110. Mike reported that [AC 150/5340-18](#) currently states that it is up to the discretion of the airport to install signs and provide supplemental guidance to help pilots. Mike [presented](#) the list of common signs that are in the AC, but explained that there is flexibility beyond that list. He said that the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) has expressed that they want to ensure that the use of the new terms will not be mandatory. Mike also explained that the proposed terms all use the word “ramp” and the term “apron” would be more appropriate. The new terms would be “FBO Apron,” “GA Transient Apron,” and “GA Tenant Apron”. Mike briefed the planned approach is to first amend the AC to add new sub-bullet examples of the new parking area designations along with a brief definition of what the terms mean. The language in the AC will still indicate implementation of signage is at the discretion of the airports and is not mandatory. Once the terms are in the AC, the Office of Airports will submit a Document Change Proposal (DCP) to propose an update to the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) and Pilot Controller Glossary (PCG).

Jim McClay, AOPA, expressed support but explained that since the original terms using the word “ramp” were agreed upon by the Airports Council International (ACI) and American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE), he may need to take the revised terms using “apron” back to them for review. He doesn’t expect that the change will present a problem. Jim also emphasized that the original intent of this request was to get the terms on Airport Diagrams, not to alter the signage that is used at the airport.

Valerie asked Mike to confirm that the only change to the designations will be “ramp” to “apron” and that the descriptions of each area will be as proposed by AOPA. Mike agreed. Valerie expressed her pleasure that this proposal is now being supported by the Office of Airports and thanked Mike and the Office of Airports for their efforts. She summarized the Office of Airports will begin work to revise the AC that Mike reported was anticipated for next summer. He will report back at the next ACM. Jim thanked Valerie and the Office of Airports for their efforts.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Mike Rottinghaus, FAA/AAS-110, will report on the status of the update to include the three new parking area terms in AC 150/5340-18, the Aeronautical Information Manual and the Pilot/Controller Glossary.

MEETING 23-01

Mike Rottinghaus, FAA/AAS-110, reported that the Office of Airports is working on the changes to [Advisory Circular \(AC\) 150/5340-18](#) that were presented at the last ACM. He confirmed the term “apron” instead of “ramp” will be used. Mike said he expects to have a draft later this year and the date of final publication will depend on the responses received. He confirmed that once the new terms are in the AC, they will submit an update to the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) and Pilot Controller Glossary (PCG) to include the new terms.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Mike Rottinghaus, FAA/AAS-110, will report on the status of the update to include the three new parking area terms in AC 150/5340-18, the Aeronautical Information Manual, and the Pilot/Controller Glossary.