

AERONAUTICAL CHARTING MEETING
Charting Group
Meeting – October 24 - 25, 2018

RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

FAA Control #18-02-328

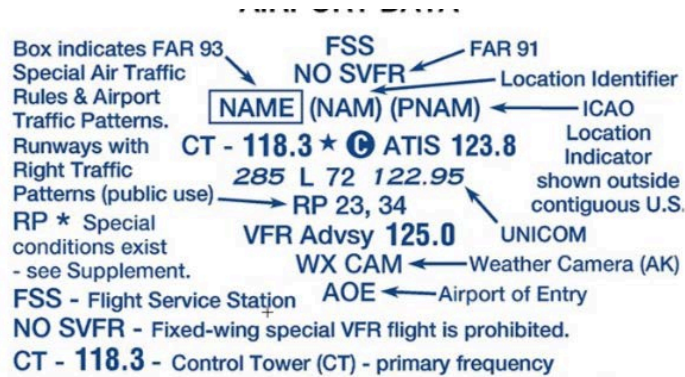
Subject: Standardizing RP* Notation to prevent pilot’s from interpreting it as “Right Pattern, All Runways”

Background/Discussion:

While this body has already considered the RP* notation on at least three separate occasions (the latest Control #11-01-235), the notation continues to cause confusion amongst pilots.

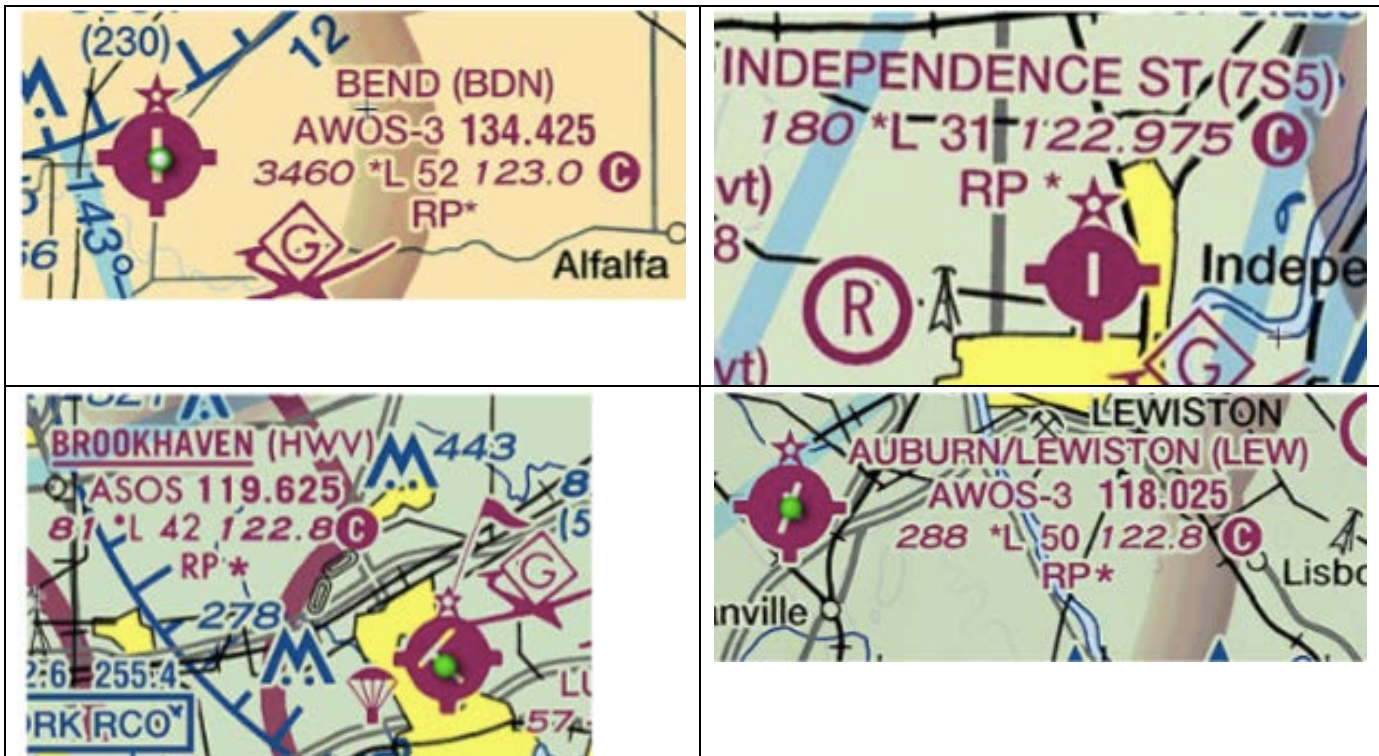
Whereas previously the charting group has considered this to be a pilot education issue, I’d like to focus on how the specific way the notation is written on charts actually helps *induce* pilots to wrongly interpret the information. Rather than simply not knowing what it is, the inconsistent way in which it is written is actively helping lead pilots to an incorrect interpretation of the symbol – namely, that RP * means all runways have right traffic.

First, it is important to immediately concede that the documentation included in an aeronautical chart instructs pilots on what to do should they see RP*:



However, as Mr. Ron Haag’s review of airports with RP* in 2012 indicated, there are very few of these symbols in use nationwide (50 in his count). Therefore, while at one point during training a pilot may have seen this information, that moment is dwarfed by the likely many, many, many more times where they have encountered RP with runway numbers afterwards. Even the main example included in the chart has the much more common RP <rwym>, <rwym>. The issue this causes is that pilots are conditioned to expect to see a *runway number* after RP.

More importantly, let’s compare a few different ways this notation *actually* appears on charts:



While “*” appears in these airports after RP in some way, it is incredibly inconsistent; Sometimes it is attached to RP, sometimes there is a space; sometimes it is bold, sometimes it is not; and most importantly, sometimes it is a superscript (RP^{*}) sometimes it is not (RP *).

As an interface designer, I contend the latter is the most problematic in terms of inducing pilots to error. Given the font height and weight, pilots who aren’t well aware of the notation can easily interpret that the * is substituting for runway markings – after all, they normally see runways in that same font size and location where that symbol is located! Therefore, it is easy to see why some of them would see the asterisk (especially when written as RP *) as indicating that all runways are right pattern traffic, especially considering how in many industries * is used as a wildcard symbol (for instance, in the popular SQL programming language, * is used to denote “all items”)

When this issue was previously discussed, this body mentioned that there is a convention for using “*” when pilots are supposed to refer to the chart supplement. However, in instances when that is the case (for instance, pilot controlled lighting), the asterisk *precedes* the symbol, and it is *always* written as a superscript (*L)

Recommendations:

Standardize the RP^{*} to more closely match other chart notation. Along with pilot-controlled lighting, put the asterisk as *preceding* RP so as to avoid pilots thinking that the asterisk is there in place of runway numbers (*RP). At the very least, ensure that the asterisk is applied consistently across all airports as a superscript, avoiding issues like what you see at KHWV which strongly lead a pilot into thinking that the * is there in place of runway numbers.

Comments:

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Date: October 5th, 2018

MEETING 18-02

Felipe Cocco, Ethical Culture Fieldston School, [presented the new recommendation](#). He stated that despite several past ACF/ACM discussions on the RP* notation on Visual Charts, the current charting still causes confusion in the pilot community. Currently, the RP* indicates that pilots need to refer to the Chart Supplement for additional information. He stated that he believes pilots misinterpret the meaning and think that RP* indicates that all runways have right traffic. He also pointed out that the symbology used on the chart varies in terms of depicting an asterisk versus a star and in how much space there is between the RP and the symbol. He recommends that the RP* notation be standardized and he also recommends moving the asterisk to before the RP to be consistent with the way asterisks are used with lighting symbology (*L).

Rune Duke, AOPA, agrees with putting the asterisk first. Rune asked if the examples with RP* are all due to glider traffic. George Bland, USAF, stated that the military uses RP* for other information too. Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-553, stated that charting doesn't look at the content of the information included in the Chart Supplement. If there is information there, the notation on the chart will be RP*.

Rick Fecht, FAA/AJV-5223, said that inconsistent depiction of the notation on the charts is due to old fonts being mixed in with new fonts. He said the Visual Charting Team will fix the inconsistent depiction on the charts. For the notation to change to *RP, there would have to be a specification change processed.

Valerie polled the audience and determined that there is concurrence for the revised depiction to *RP when a user needs to go to the Chart Supplement to read the details of which runways use right traffic and for what types of aircraft. She said she will draft an Interagency Air Committee (IAC) Specification change to standardize the depiction of the asterisk on the charts and the Legend. She will also look at the language in the Chart User's Guide and Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) to see if it sufficiently explains the meaning of the asterisk in the RP notation.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-553, to draft an Interagency Air Committee (IAC) Specification change to standardize the position of the asterisk in the RP notation on Visual Charts.

ACTION: Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-553, will investigate updates to the language in the Chart User's Guide and Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) to see if it sufficiently explains the meaning of the asterisk in the RP notation.

MEETING 19-01

Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, reviewed the topic. She stated that since the last ACM, the Interagency Air Committee (IAC) Specification change that standardizes the position of the asterisk in

the RP notation on Visual Charts has been approved. The charts will be revised beginning with the 20 June 2019 effective date. The FAA Chart User's Guide will updated and released in conjunction with the 20 June 2019 chart cycle. Revised Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) guidance has been submitted and will appear in 15 August 2019 edition. There was agreement that all actions had been fulfilled and this item could be closed.

STATUS: CLOSED