AERONAUTICAL CHARTING MEETING
Charting Group
Meeting 22-02 – October 25-27, 2022

RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

FAA Control #22-02-373

Subject: All Special Use Airspace should be labeled with floor and ceiling, contact frequencies, and hours of operation, directly on the VFR aeronautical chart

Background/Discussion: The floor and ceiling of a special use airspace (SUAS), the frequency of the controlling agency or contact facility, and the hours of operation, are important to know while flying near or through that airspace. That information should be very conspicuous to the pilot in command. There should be no need to look at the border of the chart (if using paper charts), or to scroll to the edge of the chart (if using its digital depiction), or to press on the border of the airspace on an EFIS or tablet or other EFB to bring that information up in a popup window.

Instead, that information should be printed right on the sectional, right within the boundaries of the SUAS itself.

You will object that that will make the chart more crowded. Yes, it will make the chart more crowded, but to a meaningless degree. Think about it – from a charting perspective, where is the most crowded airspace on a VFR aeronautical chart? Typically, that's near big cities where there's Class Bravo airspace. Sometimes, that Class Bravo airspace is very complex, with many shelves and many different pie wedges depending on the adjacent topography. Yet we somehow manage to cram into that very visually-busy chart the floor and ceiling of that particular sector of Class Bravo airspace, and the contact frequencies are nearby, too.

By contrast, most SUAS (like MOAs or Alert/Warning/Prohibited/Restricted areas) are situated – intentionally – over sparsely-populated territory. And where there aren't many people, there aren't many markings on the VFR chart to begin with. Adding a floor/ceiling indication, contact frequencies, and hours of operation (***expressed in local time***) to an SUAS on the chart will not clutter the chart in any meaningful or detrimental way.

Recommendations: All SUASs should be labeled with floor and ceiling, contact frequencies, and hours of operation in local time, directly on the VFR aeronautical chart.

Comments:

Submitted by: Mark A. Guenin
Organization: submitted as a private citizen
Phone: 717-305-0079
E-mail: mguenin@protonmail.com
Date: August 26, 2022

Please send completed form and any attachments to:
9-AMC-AVS-ACM-Info@faa.gov

MEETING 22-02

Mark Guenin, private citizen, presented a recommendation in which he proposed that all Special Use Airspace (SUA) areas on the Visual Flight Rules (VFR) charts be labeled with floor and ceiling, contact frequencies, and hours of operation directly on body of the VFR aeronautical charts. Currently this information can be found in tabular form on the margins of the charts. He said the downside of this proposal is the cluttering of the chart, but he explained that much of the affected airspace is over unpopulated airspace so in most instances it would not lead to excessive cluttering.

Allison Miller, FAA/AJV-A213, presented an example chart to show what this would look like in an already congested area. She showed how adding this information would cause significant clutter on the charts. She doesn't think it is practical from a readability standpoint. This recommendation will not be possible until the charts are fully digital.

Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-A250, pointed out that though in uncongested areas this information might be added to charts without causing undo clutter, the standardized location of the data is important. Pilots should know where to go in all cases to find the information so it needs to always be in a single location. For now, the tables serve that purpose. She agreed the proposal might be possible when the FAA can offer layered information in a fully digital format. For now, it needs to remain standardized in the tables so pilots always know where to find the information they need.

Mike Stromberg, UPS-IPA, likes this recommendation, but understands why it is impractical in some areas. He thinks users should look to the electronic flight bag (EFB) vendors who can already add layers of information to the charts. John Collins, Foreflight, said EFB vendors are already providing overlays with this airspace information.

Doug Willey, ALPA, said this should be part of an ongoing FAA modernization project. Valerie said the FAA is working on modernizing the charts over time. Joel Dickinson, FAA/AFS-410, said there is currently a Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics (RTCA) effort to develop new EFB standards in order to bridge the gap between the current EFB models and the new data driven model SC-227. The effort is comprised of government and industry.

Mark Guenin requested that the FAA consider just adding the ceiling and floor values to the charts so pilots can quickly know if they have to comply with it. Steve Madigan, Garmin, said from an industry perspective he thinks adding this information to the paper charts would make it too cluttered. He said industry can already provide this information in an overlay.

There was agreement that the FAA will not move forward with this recommendation at this time.

STATUS: CLOSED