

AERONAUTICAL CHARTING MEETING
Charting Group
Meeting 25-02 – January 12-14, 2026

RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

FAA Control #C_25-02-408

Subject: Regularize charting of IFR departures incorporating a visual segment

Background/Discussion: ACM Charting Group has previously entertained requests to relocate IFR “visual departures” from the Chart Supplement to the Terminal Procedures Publication. See ACM 21-01-359 Chart Supplement Visual Departures & Noise Abatement Procedures.

The discussion at that time focused on the difficulty for instrument pilots to locate procedures in the Chart Supplement but was sidetracked by “noise abatement” labeling, purportedly requiring visual departure procedures to be segregated in the Special Notices section. The procedures referenced in this recommendation accomplish instrument departure alone and have no nexus to noise abatement; consequently, this recommendation hereafter ignores any noise abatement discussion in ACM 21-01-359.

No consistent terminology has been employed to refer to these procedures across discussion, letters to airmen, Chart Supplement inclusion, nor on the titles of the charts themselves. Therefore, this recommendation adopts the term “IFR visual departure” for purposes of compactness and consistency.

IFR visual departures have been developed at locations where terrain or proximate IFR traffic do not permit the application of TERPS ODP design criteria. The author is aware of the following procedures:

- TEB DALTON 2 (see ACM 21-01-359)
- ASE COZY 1
- MYF SOLEDAD (unnumbered)
- SQL untitled “San Carlos Airport VFR to IFR Departure Procedure[s]”

Operational use of these procedures at the four airports is coordinated differently. DALTON, COZY, and SOLEDAD charts are annotated “PILOTS SHOULD SPECIFICALLY REQUEST THIS PROCEDURE” by name. The SQL procedure is assigned verbally by ATC as part of pre-departure clearance without pilot request and does not presume possession of a chart. Also, the termination of the visual segment and transition to IFR separation is not standardized across these procedures.

The author has reviewed the ACM 21-01 discussion on this topic. Despite the AFS-420 objection that these procedures cannot be charted, Jeppesen chooses to chart and place these procedures in its canonical departure chart sequence (ASE 10-3A COZY 1 Visual DEP; TEB 10-3 DALTON 2 Visual DEP).

At SQL, with the exception of a small number of commercial operators who possess a Letter of Authorization waiver, departing IFR flights must verbally accept and copy, and in most cases read back, this lengthy and complicated “VFR to IFR Procedure.” Lacking a

frequency and ATC staffing to support dedicated clearance delivery, this clearance has had to be verbalized on ground and local frequencies tens of thousands of times over a period of 30 years. To help pilots comprehend this exclusively verbal clearance, SQLbased flight organizations have over the years composed their own bespoke departure procedure charts.¹

Unsurprisingly, the reaction by itinerant pilots to the most complex clearance verbiage they've ever received is confusion. Combined with frequency congestion and a plethora of non-standard charts, these circumstances set the stage for frequent pilot deviations.

Regularizing departure procedures and publishing them in their expected location is, based on operational efficiency and safety, thus in the shared interest of flying organizations, controllers, and pilots.

Recommendations:

1. IFR departures incorporating an initial visual segment should be charted as a conventional class of departure procedure.
2. IFR visual departure procedures should appear in the TPP in the canonical departure chart sequence, following Jeppesen's example.
3. Pilot and controller responsibilities and clearance delivery should be standardized. It should not be the case that some procedures are "upon pilot request" only and others may only be initiated by ATC.
4. All procedures should be named using standard departure procedure titles (name, serial number). This permits their inclusion in a flight plan.
5. Visual departure procedures can be modeled after Charted RNAV Visual Flight Procedures (RNAV CVFP), which are visual procedures that include advisory RNAV or conventional waypoints for reference.²
6. Charts should display a lost communications procedure using a standard presentation, again following Jeppesen's example.

Benefits:

- 1) Would adoption of the recommendation prevent or reduce the likelihood of occurrence of accidents or incidents?

At SQL, itinerant pilots report great difficulty copying and comprehending the VFR to IFR departure. This author has on numerous occasions heard pilots struggling to copy the VFR downwind portion of the clearance, requiring multiple ATC iterations and readbacks. ATC has adopted the practice of breaking the clearance into chunks, at the cost of even greater frequency congestion, and having the pilot copy and read back each chunk separately; in the author's experience, this chunking frequently fails to detect readback errors. After takeoff, SQL ATCT typically monitors the departure flight path, talking the pilot in realtime through execution of the procedure, including the downwind turn and timing of the climb from VFR conditions.

¹ See Appendix A. FAA published the procedure for the first time, calling it a "noise abatement" procedure, in Chart Supplement SW Special Notices section, 31 October 2024.

² The SQL procedure recently incorporated an advisory RNAV waypoint that is not an element of the verbal clearance.

At TEB, multiple ASRS narratives³ have been filed by flight crews who describe botching some detail of the DALTON procedure.

- 2) Would adoption of the recommendation mitigate a known or potential safety hazard?

ATC-identified pilot deviations associated with execution of these procedures provide the most pertinent information about safety hazards. Some, but not all, of these deviations are captured in the ASRS narratives.

- 3) Would adoption of the recommendation resolve a known or potential issue creating operator or Air Traffic Control system errors?

Both TEB and SQL crew have been cited for numerous pilot deviations related to their respective visual departures. Confusion about verbal clearances, turn limits and speed limits, and charting were the main factors at both locations.

At TEB, in 2011, after multiple pilot deviations, FAA produced a training slide deck identifying procedure elements to which flight crews had failed to adhere. The procedure was made “on pilot request only” although clearance delivery continued to ask pilots unbidden if they possessed the A/VD-only chart.

At SQL, citing multiple pilot deviations, the FAA took three remedial steps in October 2024:

1. Notified the SQL pilot community of the new Letter to Airmen concerning the IFR visual departure procedure. See NCT-LTA-79.
 2. Created a video in the “From the Flight Deck” series detailing the IFR visual departure procedure and detailing altitude, heading, and climb deviations that had been observed in execution of the procedure.⁴ (As of this writing, this video has not been published on the FAA “From the Flight Deck” page, and SQL is not listed on this page.⁵)
 3. Published, for the first time, a graphical depiction of the procedure, naming it a “noise abatement” procedure,⁶ in the Special Notices section of the Chart Supplement SW (effective 31 October 2024). This recommendation argues that the SQL procedure is not, in fact, a noise abatement procedure but rather an IFR separation procedure.
- 4) Would adoption of the recommendation increase operational or system efficiencies?
1. Adopting conventional charting avoids designation of “on pilot request”-only procedures since the pilot can be presumed to be in possession of the chart.
 2. Permitting the FAA to chart visual segment departures facilitates ATC including the procedure in a clearance by name, avoiding frequency congestion reading the underlying route and altitude elements in full.

³ An ASRS search on Teterboro, DALTON, and “pilot deviation,” yields 44 results.

⁴ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXm8S7OqpK8>.

⁵ See https://www.faa.gov/flight_deck/.

⁶ NCT has agreed to remove the “noise abatement” designation in a forthcoming publication of the procedure.

- 5) Would any additional benefits be recognized by adoption of the recommendation?

This recommendation would also

1. make the charting of IFR visual departures consistent with that of other departure procedures;
2. reduce pilot workload by enabling pilots to locate published procedures in expected paper and electronic publication locations;
3. resolve the ongoing conflict between the creation of additional IFR departures incorporating a visual segment and the stated prohibition, under TERPS guidelines, of publishing those same IFR departures;
4. improve safety for pilots unfamiliar with what are now bespoke local procedures.

Comments:

This recommendation acknowledges that IFR visual departures are not considered ODPs for their respective runways, but takes no position as to whether such procedures should be charted as SIDs or instead some new category of departure (by way of example: VCOA procedures).

APPENDIX A.

Sample bespoke “SQL1.SQL” chart created (circa 1997) to graphically represent the SQL “VFR to IFR Departure Procedure” verbal-only clearance, as it then existed.



Submitted by: Brian Eliot
Organization: SQL IFR visual departure study group
Phone: +1 650 390 5646
E-mail: eliotb@myflighttraining.org
Date: 24 August 2025

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

MEETING 25-02

Brian Eliot briefed from a [presentation](#) on behalf of the San Carlos Airport Instrument Flight Rule Visual Departure Study Group. He began by introducing the term *instrument flight rule (IFR) visual departure*. He explained that the term refers to departures that incorporate a visual segment from takeoff until a point in the air after which the IFR clearance is provided. Brian pointed out that they have identified four or five procedures that have been developed at locations with precipitous terrain or nearby IFR airport traffic conflicts that require the pilot to initially maintain visual flight rules (VFR) either for separation from IFR traffic and/or navigate VFR via surface landmarks. He said they are starting to see increasing numbers of these types of departures in the national airspace system (NAS).

Brian then explained the history of the SQL Visual Departure Procedure that is published in the Special Notices section of the Chart Supplement. He explained that the FAA has determined they cannot publish this procedure in the Terminal Procedures Publication (TPP) because it does not meet design criteria. As a result, they must be delivered, read back, and corrected verbally regularly. He said pilots do not expect to have to brief a Special Notice as part of IFR departure planning. These procedures are also titled differently, are more difficult to locate, and have different cartographic standards than departure charts in the TPP. This proposal recommends that these graphics in the Special Notices should be standardized, named, and published in the TPP. He recommends they could be charted similarly to Charted Visual Flight Procedures (CVFPs). He provided examples of how Jeppesen charts these today, and how if the FAA did the same it would reduce pilot and controller workload, improve compliance, reduce pilot deviations, and reduce frequency congestion.

Rune Duke, FAA/AFS-420, said there have been internal discussions about this recommendation, and the FAA sees this as being very similar to a previous Recommendation Document, [21-01-359 Visual Departures and Noise Abatement Procedures](#). First, he said there is not a large population of these procedures. Second, what level of energy would the FAA want to put into developing criteria and standards for a new category of procedures that, as of right now, has an option for publication? Rune added that these VFR examples are separate and distinct from departure procedures that have an obstacle clearance design standard and are published in the TPP. They are not instrument procedures but are initiated by ATC at the local level. They are labeled as VFR, they state, 'maintain VFR,' and they're accomplished using visual maneuvers. Flight Standards continues to view these notices as a means of sharing a local procedure with the community. Rune acknowledged that there are six recommendations, and it's probably a value to look at those individually with ATC. Rune did question

whether they are categorized correctly as noise abatement procedures. Brian asked if Rune could confirm that the FAA doesn't think that the population of these procedures is going to grow. Rune replied that that is correct, there are no indications from air traffic that they are anticipating more of this type of procedure.

Dan Waker, FAA/AFS-420, said he has been working with ATC on some of the safety of flight issues related to these procedures. He explained that from ATC's perspective, this is a VFR departure to an IFR pickup, where they have added a VFR path. He sees problems with the SQL procedure that need to be addressed, particularly the inappropriate use of a waypoint. He said he wants to make sure the correct language is being used because we don't want to use IFR language and give the pilot the perception they're getting IFR service on a procedure that is intended only for VFR. He said he would be open to having a discussion outside the ACM on some of these issues.

Mike Mellsen, FAA/AFS-410, noted that he and Rich Boll, NBAA, worked on one of these procedures for Sun Valley, Idaho (SUN). He said the problem is that they are not standardized, and there are too many inconsistencies. While he understands that these are not IFR procedures and are primarily generated by air traffic, he would like to see some standardization. Rich added that these were put in place at locations where there is an inability to utilize a normal IFR departure, and that these are VFR procedures departing under VFR, and an IFR clearance is not activated. If there is any confusion about that, it needs to be addressed. Rich said that it would be helpful to have more standardization and consistent titling so that there is no confusion on the intent of these procedures.

Bruce Williams, CFI, expressed support for the discussion regarding standardization to make this information more understandable and readily available to pilots.

John Collins, ForeFlight, added that ForeFlight does associate these procedures on the airport page. He said the titling is important and these procedures should follow the model that is used with other VFR departures.

Nicholas Piper, NavCanada, added that there is a foundation in visual climb over airport (VCOA) and helicopter point-in-space criteria that includes a visual maneuvering area towards a point. He sees value in similar criteria for fixed-wing aircraft, particularly as an alternative to a situation where VCOA might not be feasible. Brian agreed and said they did look at the VCOA and the point-in-space approaches with a visual segment as being comparable to this.

Matt Fisher, NATCA, added that ATC would like to see these procedures remain available. Standardization helps ensure that it addresses some of the concerns discussed. He emphasized that these are an efficiency gain in the locations where they provide an opportunity to get off the field without disrupting operations at a major airport located close by. He said at San Francisco International Airport (SFO), they have a tremendous benefit. Matt also pointed out that at SQL, there is an excellent Letter to Airmen and YouTube videos on this procedure. He said the FAA has gone to great lengths to educate the flying public at SQL on the benefits and use of this procedure. He recognized that there may be some safety concerns with the procedure, and he agrees with addressing those.

Odie Silva, FAA/AJV-A241, added that from the perspective of the Chart Supplement, a special notice is used as a venue to disseminate this information locally to whoever might need it. The FAA does not participate in any development, maintenance, or accuracy of these notices, and the graphics are submitted print-ready. During the Chart Supplement Modernization Initiative, they had a lot of discussions on ways to help standardization, but the challenge was determining which office would enforce the standards since the procedures are developed at the local level. He pointed out that at Anchorage International Airport (ANC), there are a lot of VFR procedures, and they have developed their own standards.

Jennifer Hendi, FAA/AJV-A223, thanked Brian for his recommendation. She summarized that the FAA stands by the prior decision that they do not support adding these procedures to the TPP. There was agreement that standardization is needed, however, that's not within the scope of the Charting Group. Jennifer said that this recommendation will be brought forward to the ACM Recommendation Review Group (ARRG) for further internal agency discussion and the results briefed to the proponent and at the next ACM.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Jennifer Hendi, FAA/AJV-A223, will take this item to the ACM Recommendation Review Group to determine any action and report the outcome at ACM 26-01.