ORDER DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

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SUBJ: GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTROL OF AIR TRAFFIC AT AERIAL DEMONSTRATIONS AND FLY-INS

1. PURPOSE. This Order provides operational and administrative guidance for the control of air/ground air traffic at aerial demonstrations and fly-ins.

2. DISTRIBUTION. This order is distributed to selected offices in Washington and Regional headquarters, area offices, the Aeronautical Center and the National Aviation Facility Experimental Center. Copies sent to all Air Traffic field facilities and offices.

3. INTENT.

   a. The basic intent of this Order is to provide guidelines for standardizing, to the extent possible, the handling of aerial demonstrations and fly-ins at controlled airports and those where a temporary or mobile tower may be used.

   b. We recognize that many variables are involved such as the type and volume of air traffic, control and mixture of nonradio and radio equipped aircraft, etc. In spite of the variables, we believe considerable standardization can be achieved which will contribute to the overall safety of such operations.

4. GUIDELINES. The following general guidelines shall be considered in developing new or revised procedures for handling aerial demonstrations and fly-ins.

   a. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES.

      (1) Determine the number of visual reporting/holding points and frequencies required to accommodate the anticipated type and volume of air traffic. This may vary from two or three reporting points and one frequency to four or more outer reporting/holding points and two or more inner reporting points with four or more frequencies. The goal is to avoid allowing the flow of arrivals to exceed the airport acceptance rate.

      (2) In a nonradar environment, visual holding points should be as close to the airport as safety permits. This will expedite aircraft from the holding airspace to the traffic pattern and may allow the tower to maintain visual contact with holding aircraft.

(3) When visual reporting/holding points are used, require pilots of arriving VFR aircraft to contact "(name of facility) arrival control" on the designated frequency when over the outer reporting/holding points. When traffic volume dictates, clear aircraft to hold at the outer points until cleared by arrival control to proceed to the inner reporting points. Handle aircraft to the extent possible on a "first come-first served" basis.

(4) After an aircraft has been cleared to proceed to an inner reporting point, ensure that he remain on Arrival Control frequency until advised to contact the tower on appropriate frequency. Arrange for the tower then to subsequently clear the aircraft into the traffic pattern and assign a landing sequence.

(5) At temporary tower locations the ratio of nonradio equipped aircraft to those with radio is usually so high that requiring aircraft to hold at outer fixes will only result in penalizing the radio equipped aircraft. Consideration should be given to blending the radio equipped aircraft in with those without radios. It may be preferable to establish a general flow of traffic rather than issuing entry into traffic pattern instructions to individual aircraft. Another possibility is to limit control to preventative control, rather than trying to provide individual landing clearances.

(6) Regional consideration may be given to the development of a team of controllers that would provide all temporary ATC service for a given area or region. These controllers would be experienced in the unusual demands and better equipped to handle this kind of operation.

(7) Ensure close coordination between Arrival Control and the tower to maintain a safe and efficient flow of traffic.

(8) Use prominent geographical fixes easily recognized from the air, and preferably depicted on sectional charts, as visual reporting/holding points. When holding VFR aircraft, issue direction of holding and turns. Traffic information must also be given to aircraft cleared to hold at the same fix.

(9) Consider use of two local control positions with separate frequencies when the anticipated volume of arrival traffic makes the simultaneous use of two runways for landings advisable.

(10) Consider the feasibility of special departure procedures which will segregate VFR/IFR and/or types of aircraft while on the movement area and when airborne. When mass departures are expected following, or at midpoints during an event, departure procedures should, to the extent possible, be "silent" on the part of pilots. At such times, a controller may be stationed near the runway threshold with a portable VHF transceiver to communicate with the tower. An associated FAA flagman may also be useful.

(11) When nonradio equipped aircraft have been authorized to operate at the airport, consider the feasibility of using a mobile tower unit at the approach end of the runway in use and FAA flagmen at strategic points on the airport to direct arriving and departing aircraft on the movement area. Sufficient portable VHF transceivers should be made available to provide communications between the tower and any flagmen.

(12) Consider the feasibility of developing a Letter of Agreement with a specific group of aircraft when they will be involved in a fly-in and local flying activities. Some items that may be included are:

(a) Traffic patterns

(b) Maximum number of aircraft in the local pattern

(c) Mixing high and low performance aircraft

(d) Positive type of recall signal for nonradio aircraft

(e) Provisions for spectator safety

(f) Emergency procedures

(g) Weather minimums

(h) Pilot briefings on provisions of agreement

b. PUBLICITY.

(1) Publish a narrative description of the special air traffic control procedures and, if appropriate, a graphic chart of the area.

(2) Disseminate this information by means of Facility Bulletins, Notices to Airman in Part 3 of the Airman's Information Manual, AOPA and ALPA magazines, State Aeronautical Commission, or any other available means at least 30 days prior to the starting date of the aerial demonstrations and/or fly-ins. Charts and narrative decriptions of procedures should be placed in the hand of each arriving pilot so that departure procedures, at least will be well understood.

(3) The narrative description of the procedures may include, but need not be limited to, the following items:

(a) Control tower hours of operation and frequencies

(b) Traffic patterns

(c) VFR arrival procedures, effective times and dates

(d) VFR departure procedures, effective times and dates

(e) ATIS information

(f) Airport closings

(g) Flight plans and weather information

(h) Anticipated arrival delays

(i) Anticipated departure delays

(j) Description of mobile tower and its specific location on the airport

(4) The graphic chart of the area may include, but need not be limited to, the following items:

(a) Outer visual holding/reporting points and the frequency on which to contact Arrival Control. Frequency assignment may also be made on the basis of aircraft headings to the airport. It may also be desirable to depict 5 and 10, 15 or 20 mile radius circles.

(b) Where Automatic Terminal Information Service is available, indicate the frequency/s and the fact that pertinent arrival and departure information will be broadcast.