

ORDER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

AL 7110.10A

ALASKAN REGION

August 7, 2003

SUBJ: FLIGHT SERVICE STATION AVIATION CLOSED CIRCUIT VIDEO WEATHER CAMERA SERVICE

1. PURPOSE. This order is updated to reflect current practices for establishing procedures for the utilization of closed circuit video weather camera images for pilot weather briefing. The video weather camera images should not be used as the sole source for weather information, but used in combination with other available weather related products.

2. DISTRIBUTION. This order is distributed to the branch level in the Air Traffic Division and to Fairbanks Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS), Kenai AFSS, Juneau AFSS, and associated satellite Flight Service Station (FSS) facilities.

3. CANCELLATION. Order AL 7110.10, Flight Service Station Aviation Closed Circuit Video Weather Camera Service, dated July 13, 2001, is cancelled.

4. BACKGROUND.

a. In 1993, Flight Standards initiated a feasibility study on "Obtaining Additional Weather Reporting Capability between Juneau and Skagway, Alaska, with Additional Commentary on Greater Southeast Alaska," and in 1995 the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) performed a study on "Aviation Safety in Alaska."

b. On October 6, 1999, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) received funding to install aviation closed circuit video weather cameras as an aid to visual flight rule (VFR) pilots operating in Alaska. The closed circuit video weather cameras will provide pilots with information necessary for pre-flight and en-route planning, including the dissemination of the information to pilots by flight service stations. Additionally, Alaska's geographical size and remoteness creates a challenge in obtaining real or near real time weather reports for pilots. These circumstances created the need for another method of obtaining weather information, such as in mountain passes and areas lacking reliable weather reports.

c. Consequently, the Alaskan Region developed the Alaskan Video Weather Camera Program to satisfy user needs and the NTSB's recommendation. Internal FAA and subsequent industry/user meetings resulted in a list of candidate locations throughout the State, to include mountain passes and other non-Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) locations. On February 5, 1999, the FAA Alaska Weather Camera Program was established with its first camera located on the roof of the Federal Office Building in downtown Anchorage for proof of concept. Since that day, the FAA continues installing video weather cameras throughout Alaska.

5. PROCEDURES. Alaskan Region AFSS/FSS's shall, upon request:

- a. Provide weather video camera image information to pilots.
- b. When relaying information from a weather video camera site, state the:
 - (1) Name of weather video camera site.
 - (2) Directional view of the weather video camera site.
 - (3) Time of the image(s).

c. Use geographical annotations if available, to aid in interpreting weather conditions. Height markers are there to be used as a reference. When relaying information concerning a geographic reference, phrases such as, "Tops of mountains/hilltops obscured," or "Tops of mountains visible," could be used.

d. In the event a weather video camera site is experiencing problems or fails, make an entry in the Daily Record of Facility Operations, FAA Form 7230-4, or electronic equivalent (found online at feds.faa.gov) and notify the Airway Facilities Satellite Operations Center (SOC).

e. DO NOT provide cloud heights to pilots based on camera images. Cloud heights CANNOT be discerned from the camera images due to varying reasons. You can however, provide the cloud heights as reported by the Meteorological Aviation Report (METAR) observation or Pilot Reports (UA's).

f. The obstruction to visibility CANNOT be discerned from the camera images. It is best to mention the obscuration but not the type. Utilize surface observation reports and pilot reports when relaying an obscuration.

g. The video weather camera images should be utilized with other weather products and should not be used as your sole source of weather.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES. It is the responsibility of each AFSS air traffic manager to ensure that their facilities are in compliance with the provisions of this order. Additionally, all AFSS air traffic managers shall ensure that facility personnel are trained on these procedures.

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