

**AERONAUTICAL CHARTING MEETING**  
**Instrument Procedures Group**  
**Meeting 22-01 – April 25-26, 2022**

**RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT**

**FAA Control # 22-01-364**

**Subject: Straight-In and Circling Minimums NA notes**

**Background/Discussion:**

Some approach charts, such as the RNAV (GPS) RWY 28 approach at Bermuda Dunes, CA (KUDD) include notes like the following:

*Rwy 28 Straight-in and Circling minimums NA at night.*

The chart; however, does not include a note that the procedure itself is NA at night.

These notes cause confusion among pilots and flight instructors, as was noted more than a decade ago in **RD 09-02-291**. That issue, which eventually focused on design criteria and internal FAA policy, was discussed for several years and then closed by the IPG at the 15-01 meeting without resolving the confusing language of the notes.

The guidance currently available to pilots and ATC remains ambiguous. For example, **AIM 5-5-4. Instrument Approach** lists several separate notes which can declare an entire procedure NA at night or state that straight-in and/or circling minimums are NA at night:

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a. Pilot.

1. Be aware that the controller issues clearance for approach based only on known traffic.
2. Follows the procedure as shown on the IAP, including all restrictive notations, such as:

**(a) Procedure not authorized at night;**

(b) Approach not authorized when local area altimeter not available;

(c) Procedure not authorized when control tower not in operation;

(d) Procedure not authorized when glide slope not used;

**(e) Straight-in minimums not authorized at night; etc.**

(f) Radar required; or

(g) The circling minimums published on the instrument approach chart provide adequate obstruction clearance and pilots should not descend below the circling altitude until the aircraft is in a position to make final descent for landing. Sound judgment and knowledge of the pilot's and the aircraft's capabilities are the criteria for determining the exact maneuver in each instance since airport design and the aircraft position, altitude and airspeed must all be considered. [Emphasis added]

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Chapter 4 of the *Instrument Procedures Handbook* includes the following text:

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If there is penetration of the 20:1 surface, the published visibility can be no lower than 1 SM with a note prohibiting approaches **to the affected runway at night** [emphasis added] (both straight-in and circling). [Figure 4-21] Circling may be permitted at night if penetrating obstacles are marked and lighted. If the penetrating obstacles are not marked and lighted, a note is published that night circling is "Not Authorized."

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The notes on the chart at KUDD do not explicitly say that the *entire approach is NA at night*, and, as noted above, when that prohibition is necessary, the AIM and TERPS give designers the option of including a note to that effect.

A literal reading of the AIM, the notes for this procedure, and the other guidance cited above, suggests that you can still fly the approach at night, *but you cannot land on runway 28*. You could, it seems, fly the RWY 28 approach but circle to land on RWY 10 or cancel IFR and land on runway 28 under VFR.

It seems that in the example at KUDD, if you were arriving from the east, you might prefer to fly the approach to RWY 28 and then circle to land RWY 10 instead of flying the approach to RWY 10 but you cannot fly the RWY 28 approach and then land on that runway.

In the IFR training environment, we do not often talk about or practice "circling" to the "straight-in runway," but in most cases, that is an option. You could, for example, fly to the circling MDA to runway 36 (at some generic airport) and then, once over the runway and with the appropriate visual references and while fitting in with other traffic, join the pattern and land on 36 instead of, say, runway 18, 27, or 9. We sometimes do this in IFR training when we need to accomplish a circle-to-land approach to a landing as part of a stage check, IPC, or practical test, especially when the wind and prevailing traffic favor the "straight-in" runway and an airport has only one runway surface.

### **Recommendations:**

FAA guidance for pilots and ATC in the AIM and handbooks such as the *Instrument Flying Handbook*, the *Instrument Procedures Handbook*, and *Air Traffic Control* should clarify the intent of such NA at Night notes.

Guidance for procedure designers and FAA charting organizations should also clarify the wording and publication of such notes on procedure charts.

If, for example, the intent is to make an entire procedure NA at night, a single note to that effect should be published on the chart:

*Procedure NA at Night*

If the procedure design requires that either straight-in or circling lines of minimums to a specific runway end are NA, then notes should make it clear that they apply to the *runway in the procedure title* and that circling to another runway may (or may not) be allowed:

Straight-in minimums to land RWY 28 NA at night  
Circling minimums to land RWY 28 NA at night

**Comments:**

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