

**Instrument Procedures Group  
Meeting 20-02 – Oct 27, 2020**

**RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT**

**FAA Control # 20-02-353**

**Subject: Revised Guidance & Charting for Order 8260.3 Circling Area Dimensions**

**Background/Discussion:** This is a proposed revision to previously accepted guidance from closed [ACF CG issue 09-01-213](#), which is linked for your review.

8260.3B, Chg. 21 revised the circling approach obstacle evaluation area (OEA) dimensions to be variable based on airport elevation and circling minimum descent altitude (CMDA). The intent was that all procedures in the National Airspace System (NAS) with circling minimums would be revised to apply these new areas.

As each procedure was revised, an icon with a white “C” on a black field (hereafter referred to as a circling icon) would be added to the chart to alert the pilot that the new criteria had been applied. An expanded Chart Notice explaining the circling icon and revised Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) guidance were published. The first revised procedure was charted in early 2013. Considering the magnitude of the effort, it has taken longer than anticipated to complete the work. Accordingly, Flight Standards (FS), Flight Inspection (FI), and Aeronautical Information Services (AIS) began collaborating in early 2019 to develop a "get well" plan to include establishing implementation priorities.

By early 2020, amendments at most high priority airports were finished and we were on track for completing the remainder per the plan. However, FI operations have now been unexpectedly reduced due to the unprecedented global pandemic. In order to continue to focus on the highest risks while reaching a final resolution considering the resources available, AIS, FI, and FS have modified the implementation strategy:

- AIS will revise the remaining procedures and will issue P-NOTAMs with new minimums as necessary.
- FI will complete validation of new circling areas, as they are able to do so.
- Since the procedures will be amended by P-NOTAM (with CMDAs increased as necessary) before FI has validated the revised circling areas, those procedures will be charted without the circling icon.
- Once all remaining procedures have been revised and validated, the circling icon will be removed from all approach plates.
- FS will initiate an update to the AIM to remove references to the circling icon and all references to the legacy circling evaluation area dimensions.
- FS will update the Instrument Procedures Handbook (IPH) to remove all references to the legacy circling evaluation area dimensions.
- FS will revise Order 8260.19 to remove the requirement to “chart circling icon.”
- AIS will update the Terminal Procedures Publication (TPP) front matter to remove references to the circling icon and all references to the legacy circling evaluation area dimensions.

FS believes there is no negative impact on safety in *not* charting the circling icon, as the procedures will have been evaluated with the larger areas, and the CMDAs increased if necessary. The pilots' understanding *without* the circling icon is that they should operate utilizing the smaller legacy maneuvering areas. While they may encounter some increased CMDAs, since they are operating to circling minimums, they will be able to maneuver to lose additional altitude if necessary.

**Recommendations:** FS, AIS, and FI recommend from this point forward, revised procedures (with CMDAs increased where necessary) will be charted without the circling icon. We also recommend once the final procedures have been revised and validated, the circling icon will be removed from all approach plates, roughly concurrent with the attendant changes to the AIM and IPH.

**Comments:**

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**Initial meeting 20-02:** Jeff Rawdon, FAA Flight Procedures and Airspace Group (FPAG), briefed the issue from the [slides](#). Rich Boll, NBAA, asked about a timeline on the completion strategy for the remaining procedures, Jeff said this is still being evaluated. Johnnie Baker, FAA Aeronautical Information Services (AIS), said there are about 1,460 procedures left, and he anticipates AIS having all these evaluated around July 2021 but no later than October 31, 2021. Flight Inspection will keep working these as they can. Valerie Watson, AIS, advised they have to chart what is on the form, and these are published under authority of Part 97, so removing the circling icons will require docket action. Valerie suggested if procedures are revised due to an increase in minimum circling altitudes via P-NOTAM, the circling icon should be added for consistency. TJ Nichols, FPAG, said the problem is Flight Inspection (FI) views charting the Icon as a separate action requiring flight validation, and FI resources are operationally limited at the moment due to the pandemic. The intent is to get all of the remaining procedures evaluated, and add higher minimums where required, while working within the limitations of the FI schedule. Rich Boll, NBAA, discussed issues for the pilots without the circling icon, and added Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) guidance was recently changed on approach category

speeds. He would like an evaluation on how many of the remaining procedures would see an increase in minimums. Rich thinks the modification of minimums as required is more important than dimensions. TJ expressed the higher altitude airports were already prioritized first, and mostly lower altitude airports are left. Johnnie concurred that mostly smaller airports are left, and FI will prioritize validations from the list of revised procedures. Andrew Lewis, Garmin, asked now many cycles the ultimate removal of the circling icons would take, and Valerie Watson said the charting team can do 350 P-NOTAMS per 56-day publication cycle. *(Editorial note: after the meeting, AIS provided the information that there are currently 5,104 charts with the circling icon, and likely some additional projects in the workflow that would add the circling icon. They anticipate removal of icons from approximately 1,000 charts each 56-day cycle, so are estimating removal of all circling icons could be accomplished in six cycles.)* Andrew asked that he be kept apprised of developments and FPAG will work out details on how to accomplish that.

#### **Action Items:**

- Flight Procedures and Airspace Group will brief progress on evaluation and validation of the remaining 1,462 procedures.
- Flight Procedures and Airspace Group will determine a means to keep the data and chart providers informed on the process.

**Status:** Item open

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**Meeting 21-01:** Jeff Rawdon, FAA Flight Procedures and Airspace Group (FPAG), briefed the issue from the [slides](#). The conversion process is limited by other work, but is ongoing. There is no time estimate for Flight Inspection to complete evaluation of the remaining areas, but once completed, AIM and IPH guidance will follow. Rich Boll, NBAA, inquired how many approaches will continue to be published without addition of the circling icon, and Pat Mulqueen, FAA Aeronautical Information Services, said he would research the number and forward to Rich, adding that T-NOTAMS have all been issued for all procedures that had been identified with higher circling minimum descent altitudes (CMDAs) based on the completed evaluations. The issue will remain open until all remaining procedures in the inventory have been evaluated by Flight Inspection and the process to remove the circling icons begins. Don McGough, FAA Aircraft Operations Technical Support (AJF-170), reiterated all CMDAs have been raised where necessary, but until Flight Inspection has evaluated the larger circling areas, they do not want an indication (the circling icon) to pilots they can operate with the larger circling radii. They are evaluating the areas at the remaining airports as they are able. Valerie Watson, FAA Charting Products Integration Team (AJV-A250), added the Charting Group has committed to revising 1000 charts per each 56-day cycle to remove the icon, and the entire inventory should be complete within six cycles, once Flight Inspection has completed their evaluations. Rich inquired if, once the update process begins, the TPP legend could be revised to remove the original TERPs radii and just reference the revised radius guidance to eliminate confusion. He also suggested adding language to indicate all procedures have been evaluated

regardless of the publication or lack thereof of the circling icon. Valerie and Jeff agreed to consider this, and pointed out it would require Flight Standards guidance to accomplish this.

**Action Items:**

- Flight Procedures and Airspace Group will provide a status update at the next ACM

**Status:** Item open

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**Meeting 21-02:** Jeff Rawdon, FAA Flight Procedures and Airspace Group (FPAG), briefed the issue from the [slides](#). The effort is still in progress. Rich Boll, NBAA, asked for an estimate of when icons will be removed or the bulk change may happen, and Pat Mulqueen, FAA Instrument Flight Procedures Group (AJV-400), said the timing will be related to when Flight Inspection can complete evaluation of the remaining expanded circling areas. Rich discussed a recent significant increase in minima at Aspen (700 ft), where some had mistakenly thought the Order 8260.3B Change 21 changes had been applied. This was corrected and a P-NOTAM was issued. Rich was trying to get an idea when the effort will be completed. Pat said airports like Aspen are the exception to the rule in discontinuing using the circling icon as the process continues, and these may need to be addressed individually. Jeff added this might require internal Flight Standards and Aeronautical Information Services discussion to look at exception airports like this.

**Actions:** The Agency will determine if locations such as Aspen should be treated as exceptions for addition of the circling icon.

**Status:** Item open

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**Meeting 22-01:** Jeff Rawdon, FAA Flight Procedures and Airspace Group (FPAG), briefed background on the issue from the [slides](#). All circling areas have been evaluated by the Flight Procedures Group and T-NOTAMS have been converted to P-NOTAMS. All that remains is for Flight Inspection to evaluate the remaining areas, with completion of this effort had been expected around May 2022. Flight Inspection has been evaluating these as scheduling allowed, and as of April 2022 still had roughly 135 airports remaining. Once the Flight Inspection evaluations are completed, FAA will publish an InFO (Information for Operators) to explain that the circling icons will be removed. Flight Standards will make IPH and AIM changes as required. Aeronautical Information Services will change the TPP legends and general information sections. The removal of the circling icons will be done in batches by the Charting Office, and should take six chart cycles (approximately one year) to complete. Bill Tuccio, Garmin, asked if any consideration is being given to changes in the FAA instrument knowledge exam or the practical test standards to address this, and Jeff said the FAA will investigate that. Valerie Watson, FAA Charting Products Integration Team (AJV-A250), asked if there should be guidance during the icon removal process, and Jeff said that will be accomplished with the InFO publication and IPH and AIM changes.

**Actions:** The Agency will provide an updated status at ACM 22-02.

**Status:** Item open.

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**Meeting 22-02:** Jeff Rawdon, FAA Flight Procedures and Airspace Group (FPAG), briefed background on the issue from the [slides](#). All circling areas evaluations and necessary Notices to Air Mission (NOTAMs) [are expected to be complete with the December 29, 2022 chart cycle]. The current estimate for Flight Inspection validation completion is now the first half of 2023. Once all the areas have been validated, Charting will begin the process of removing all the icons with a completion estimate of six chart cycles. When this last process begins, Flight Standards will begin the process of updating AIM and IPH information and the Charting Office will update the TPP legends. Valerie Watson, FAA Charting Products Integration Team (AJV-A250), said when they begin removing the icons, there will be a chart notice and updates to the Chart Users Guide.

**Actions:** FPAG will continue to provide briefings at subsequent ACM meetings until the initiative is complete.

**Status:** Item open

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**Meeting 23-01:** Jeff Rawdon, FAA Flight Procedures and Airspace Group (FPAG), briefed background on the issue from the [slides](#) and discussed the current status of the effort. The only remaining step is for Flight Inspection to complete validation of the remaining few circling areas with completion estimated for later this year. Charting will begin the process of circling icon removal from the charts after the Flight Inspection validations are completed. Once begun, completion estimates for removal of all circling icons is still expected to be six chart cycles, or roughly one year.

Steven Madigan, Garmin, is concerned about the length of time necessary to remove all the icons and asked if there was any plan for prioritization, voicing concern regarding a mix of charts with and without circling icons. Steve also inquired regarding the transmittal of source information to indicate removal of a circling icon. Jennifer Hendi, FAA Charting Products Integration Team (AJV-A250), said information would be transmitted to indicate that change.

Rich Boll, NBAA, asked when AIM guidance would be updated relative to the removal of the icons, and Jeff said the information in the AIM, Instrument Procedures Handbook, Chart Users' Guide, and any other guidance materials would be updated as nearly as possible to the removal of the last circling icons. Jeff said it was likely that an InFO (Information for Operators) would be published at the beginning of the icon removal process to explain the removal. Joshua Fenwick, Garmin, suggested including language that would clarify that by a certain date all evaluations had been completed and that the circling icons could be disregarded. Jeff suggested that could be a possibility and said they would consider that.

Rich suggested that removal of those icons at KMEM and KJFK could be problematic since both of those airports are used heavily in simulator training and they both have circling icons currently. Rich encouraged that airports used in simulators should be the last to have icons removed.

Michael Stromberg, Independent Pilots Association (IPA)/UPS, suggested the InFO should explain that all circling areas had been evaluated for the larger circling areas and that it would not matter if the chart did or did not have an icon. Jeff said they would review the information to be included in the InFO and would consider incorporating that suggestion. Rich asked if a special notice could be placed in the TPP advising the changes. Jennifer said that had not been done before and would check into it. Michael inquired about the possibility of changes for the AIM and Chart Users' Guide: one change at the beginning and the second at the end of the icon removal process. Jeff said that could be considered but would be challenging to accomplish. Rich concurred with Michael.

Aaron Jacobsen, Boeing/Jeppesen asked if any icons were being removed yet, suggested there might have been examples of this at KBFM and KAFW, and said they would forward examples of this to Jennifer. Pat Mulqueen, FAA Instrument Flight Procedures Group (AJV-400), said the policy is to not add or delete icons at this time, but if something appeared contrary to that it could be reported via the Instrument Flight Procedures (IFP) Gateway website.

Steven Madigan, Garmin, inquired if procedures would be up-numbered as amendments for removal of the circling icons, and Jeff said that was a detail that would need to be resolved.

**Actions:** FPAG, Instrument Flight Procedures Group, and Charting will continue to work the issue and will provide a status update at ACM 23-02.

**Status:** Item open

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**Meeting 23-02:** Jeff Rawdon, FAA Flight Procedures and Airspace Group (FPAG), briefed the ongoing effort to bring all circling evaluation areas into compliance with Order 8260.3B, Chg 21 criteria. Flight Inspection is still working to complete validation of the remaining areas. Jeff briefed that the plan for removal of the circling icon is to update the charting specification to specify the note "chart circling icon" on the source forms should be disregarded. An Information for Operators (InFO) will be published during the circling icon removal process and other guidance will follow when the process is completed.

Rich Boll, NBAA, inquired how the removal process would work for Jeppesen, Lido, or other chart providers. Jeff said there would be an informational letter for those providers that would describe the removal process and give them the necessary information to initiate icon removal on their products. Rich discussed the need for AIM guidance as soon as possible to inform pilots that expanded circling areas would be available for all procedures, even with no published

circling icon, and Jeff said they prefer only one AIM change at the end of the icon removal process. Rich expressed interest in an AIM update at the beginning of the removal process and then a second update to remove all circling icon references once they were all removed. Jeff understood Rich's concerns and request and said Flight Standards would consider them.

**Actions:** FPAG will continue work with Terminal Charting and other chart providers to begin the icon removal process and will provide a status update at ACM 24-01.

**Status:** Item open

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