

**AERONAUTICAL CHARTING MEETING**  
**Instrument Procedures Group**  
**Meeting 21-01 – April 26 - 27, 2021**

**RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT**

**FAA Control #21-01-356**

**Subject:**      **COMMON SOUNDING FIX NAMES**

**Background/Discussion:**

Complaints have been made about common spelled or common sounding navigation fix names that are being used in terminal areas are causing confusion.

Complaints have been made by pilots that the fixe's name was not found in the database. The problem was that the spelling what not known.

Complaints have been made by pilots and ATC that the radio frequencies were not available because ATC was using precious radio time to spell fixe's names and pilots were repeating those fixe's names.

The fixes names are sometimes not easy to pronounce, to recognize, to write and to locate.

The number of available fixes name is decreasing over time.

While doing all this pilots do not PILOTATE and NAVIGATE then SAFETY IS REDUCED.

**Recommendations:** Rename all IAP fixes.

Instrument Approach Plates (IAP) contains an average of about 5 fixes (Waypoints and Intersections).

Every waypoints and intersections names found on an IAP should be replaced by the letters A, B, C, D, etc or by the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Those new waypoint's name should always be in the same order: 'A' being the closest to the runway, 'B' the second closest, etc.

Advantages: 1- 'Charlie' is easier to remember then OKTUS.

2- 'Charlie' is easier to find in the database then OKTUS.

3- 'Charlie' is faster to find in the database.

4- The order is always the same: A, B, C, D, etc. A being the closest to the runway.

5- The pilot will know that 'Charlie' is the 3<sup>rd</sup> fix before the runway.

6- Less time spent on the frequency by the pilot and ATC.

- 7- Less errors and confusions.
- 8- Less stress, especially for new pilots.
- 9- More time to PILOTATE, NAVIGATE and COMMUNICATE. SAFETY IS INCREASED.
- 10- Release good sounding names to be used where problems exist.
- 11- Release good sounding names to be used for enroute fixes.

Disadvantages: Changes in the database (editors, publishers, users).

More and more GPS approaches exist and most of them have the same ‘‘T’’ design with two fixes on final (waypoints A and B) and one fix on each side at 5 nm away (waypoints C and D). Waypoint E could be the MISSED waypoint. After a fast look at the IAP the pilot will be able to find the waypoint he/she is cleared for.

Example 1: The pilot is cleared to the Charlie waypoint GPS approach runway 18 at KDAB. Then, from the database the pilot choose KDAB/18/GPS/C.

Example 2: The pilot is cleared to the Delta waypoint GPS approach runway 36 at KDAB. Then, from the database the pilot choose KDAB/36/GPS/D.

Example 3: The pilot is cleared to the Bravo waypoint ILS approach runway 9 at KMIA. Then, from the database the pilot choose KMIA/9/ILS/B.

Or, instead of A, B, C, D or 1, 2, 3, 4 the waypoints could be IAF1 (Initial Approach Fix 1), IF (Intermediate Fix), FAF, MAF.

In practice, the pilot already have the name of the destination airport in his computer. Then, the ATIS will be monitored approaching the destination airport and the runway will be entered in the computer. Then, ATC will clear the pilot to the ‘‘Charlie’’ waypoint and the pilot will choose ‘‘C’’ from his computer.

There are also those pilots flying with no database but this would not be a problem for them.

Comments:

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**Initial meeting 21-01:** André Durocher, Quebec Land Surveyor, briefed his new [issue](#) from the RD. He explained his concept of fix naming and increasing to more than five alphanumeric characters, listing both advantages and disadvantages. Jeff Rawdon, FAA Flight Procedures and Airspace Group (FPAG), confirmed André wanted two things: more than five characters allowed in fix names and every procedure fix to use similar naming conventions driven by position and use. André showed an example slide, discussing the benefit of the new fix name convention, indicating to the pilot where on a procedure they would be headed. Jeff asked how this naming convention would work for fixes used on several approaches, such as a fix functioning as an IF/IAF on an approach to a runway and functioning as the missed approach clearance limit for the approach to the opposite end of the runway, which is a very common occurrence in the NAS. André said in this case you could leave this name alone. Michael Stromberg, UPS, brought up the problem that allowing more than five characters in a fix name would require massive expenditures due to limitations of existing navigation systems, and suggested there would be no feasible way to accomplish that part of the proposal. Michael suggested there would be human factors concerns with possible confusion on what would be very similar fix names. For example, on parallel approaches, adding distinct names provides a layer of protection. Rich Boll, NBAA, agreed with Michael, saying expansion beyond five characters would not be likely. However, Rich said they recognize a lack of pronounceable names, and this issue does bring up a possible solution. He suggested if alphanumeric fix naming was used with combinations of numbers and letters for fixes that would not be used in aircraft-controller communication, it could free up usage of some pronounceable names. Rich discussed an ICAO naming convention for waypoints on a procedure using the last two letters from the airport ID (for example CT for KICT) with three numeric characters. The convention could use the character 1 for an initial, 2 for an intermediate, 3 for final, and 4 for the missed approach segment. TJ Nichols, FAA Flight Procedures and Airspace Group (FPAG), brought up data issues, specifically the way the FAA interfaces with ICAO ICARD allocation system which ensures no duplicate designators in nearby geographical areas. TJ thinks states reserve specific names or blocks, and that could be a limiting factor for this idea. Michael agreed with Rich's idea that many fixes in the NAS are never used in communication, adding this naming convention is already being used and working well today across the world, and this would free up needed pronounceable names. Gary Fiske, FAA ATC Procedures (Terminal) Team (AJV-P310), agreed with the concept of changing fixes that will never be pronounced to use alphanumeric characters.

Jeff summarized that the original RD was not feasible, but the concept of name changing non-verbalized fixes, along with a naming convention indicating usage, could be worth consideration. TJ agreed this is open to further study, but not with this RD as submitted. Rich volunteered to submit a new RD on alphanumeric fix naming for the next ACM. The group discussed ICAO usage presently, and how to go about a proposal for NAS changes. TJ said the applicable directive is JO 7400.2, not an 8260-series order, and was not sure if this would have bearing on ACM activity. Jeff added he does not want to introduce an issue that is beyond the scope of the ACM. Gary said JO 7400.2 is an FAA ATO Missions Support order (ATO), and does not think the ATO (AJV-P) would have an issue with a change of naming convention on non-verbalized fix names, adding he likes the concept. *Editor's note: After the meeting, FPAG decided to begin initial study of the feasibility of revising the naming convention prior to the next ACM and coordinate with NBAA regarding a new RD.*

**Status:** Item not accepted