

GOVERNMENT/INDUSTRY AERONAUTICAL CHARTING FORUM
Instrument Procedures Group
(Transcribed/Re-Formatted)
HISTORY RECORD

FAA Control # 96-01-159

SUBJECT: Specified Ceiling Requirement for High HAA/HAT MDAs

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: Prior to the implementation of TERPS in November, 1967, the United States specified a ceiling value in SIAPs, which was equal to or greater than the HAA/HAT of the MDA or DH. The original authors of TERPS envisioned that specified ceiling values would continue to be required in certain IAPs, presumably those with higher HATs/HAAAs. The following language is contained in TERPS, paragraph 310, but it is ignored because of the permissive construction:

“The weather minimums shall include the visibility required by the procedure, and may include a ceiling value which is equal to or greater than the height of the MDA or DH above the airport elevation. Where ceilings are not specified, the height if the straight-in MDA or DH above the highest elevation in the touchdown zone (or the airport elevation in circling approaches) shall be shown on the procedures. Alternate minimums, when specified, shall be stated as ceiling and visibility.”

The presumption was that the FAA would use good judgment in the application of this option to higher HAAs/HATs. A case in point is Eagle, CO, with an HAA of 2,605ft, but no specified ceiling in the SIAP. United Airlines, an operator into Eagle, elects to have their Eagle SIAPs charted with “Ceiling required.” ALPA believes this requirement should apply to all operators at locals such as Eagle. Many foreign countries apply this requirement to some SIAPs.

RECOMMENDATION: “Ceiling required” should be mandatory for all SIAPs that have an HAA or HAT of greater than 700ft. The presumption with such SIAPs is that there are some big “bumps” below the MDA that must be seen to be avoided, and which will be substantially enhanced by requiring reported ceiling to exist. Further, reported ceilings tend to be more representative of conditions along the approach course as the height of the ceiling increases; thus negating the argument that pilots should “look see” ceiling because reported ceilings are inaccurate. Retention of the “ceiling-look see” concept below 700ft, HAA/HAT will permit continued use of “ceiling-look see” authority at most major terminals and where SIAPs are not encumbered by close-in, significant obstacle problems below the required obstacle clearance baseline.

COMMENT: This recommendation affects Handbook 8260.3B, 8260.19C, and the AIM.

Submitted by: Tom Young, Chairman
Charting and Instrument Procedures Committee
Air Line Pilots Association
March 6, 1995

INITIAL DISCUSSION (MEETING 96-01): Wally Roberts, ALPA led the discussion over procedures that allow pilots the flexibility to commence an approach as long as the airport has the required visibility minimums. They believe a ceiling should be required before a pilot may attempt an approach when the HAT/HAA value is 700' or greater. This is already a requirement by some airlines at some locations. Discussion led to the conclusion that this requirement could be addressed in Ops Specs or may require a change to CFR 14, Parts 97 & 121. All agreed to study the issue further for discussion at the next meeting. **Action: Item Open (All Parties).**

MEETING 96-02: A discussion on this issue was deferred until the next meeting. All participants are to review the issue for discussion. **Action: Item Open (All Parties).**

MEETING 97-01: A group discussion was led by Wally Roberts, ALPA. They believe a ceiling should be required for all IAPs that have a HAA/HAT of 700' or greater. The premise is that approaches with such high minimums must also have high obstructions in the final/circling areas that must be seen and avoided once leaving the MDA. Requiring a ceiling for the approach will enhance safety. Jim Nixon, AFS-440 noted that this would require a change to the CFRs. Wally noted that as long as the requirement was on the FAA 8260 series form, part 97 would be satisfied. Major Mike Miller, AFFSA noted that the USAF currently only requires visibility to conduct an approach, but is re-visiting the ceiling and visibility requirement. Rudy Ruana, Jeppesen noted that this is an issue currently being addressed by the JAA, and their position should be considered before making U.S. policy changes. Jim asked if applying this requirement at Part 139 airports would satisfy ALPA concerns. The response was yes. AFS-420 will research this issue through legal and try to get AOPA, AGC & NBAA inputs for the next ACF meeting. **Action: Item Open (AFS-420)**

MEETING 97-02: At the 97-1 meeting, a discussion was led by Wally Roberts, ALPA. ALPA believes that a ceiling should be required for all IAPs that have a HAA/HAT of 700' or greater. The premise is that approaches with such high minimums must also have high obstructions in the final/circling areas that must be seen and avoided once leaving the MDA. Requiring a ceiling for the approach will enhance safety. Jim Nixon, AFS-440 noted that this would require a change to the CFRs. Wally noted that, as long as the requirement is on the 8260 form, Part 97 would be satisfied. Maj. Mike Miller, AFFSA noted that the USAF currently only requires visibility to conduct an approach, but is re-visiting the ceiling and visibility requirement. Rudy Ruana, Jeppesen noted that this is an issue currently being addressed by the JAA and the JAA position should be considered before making U.S. policy changes. Jim asked if applying this requirement at Part 139 airports would satisfy ALPA's concerns. The response was yes. AFS-420 will research this issue through legal and try to get AOPA and NBAA inputs for the next meeting. IOUs' are continued to next meeting (98-1). AFS-420 will coordinate with AOPA, NBAA and AGC for input and discussion at the next meeting. **Action: Item Open (AFS-420)**

MEETING 98-01: Paul Best, AFS-400 briefed there was not enough interest from other user groups to pursue this change, and recommended the issue be closed. The group, except ALPA, concurred. ALPA will re-address the issue internally and resubmit a position paper if they feel warranted. **Status: Item Closed**