

AERONAUTICAL CHARTING FORUM
Charting Group
ACF 11-01
RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

FAA Control # 11-01-238

Subject:

Miscellaneous symbols on VFR sectional.

Background/Discussion:

There are approved aerobatic areas where members that are signature to the waiver perform their specific activity. Unlike glider or parachute areas the aerobatic areas are not depicted on VFR sectionals. Many of these areas do not require a NOTAM to be active so a pilot would not know of the area through NOTAMs, or from a VFR sectional. They can only be found listed in the Special Notices section of the AFD. But unfortunately most pilots do not familiarize themselves with information in these sections.

Recommendations:

The creation of a symbol depicting an aeronautical area, or box which would be added to VFR sectionals. (Similar to glider or hang glider) This would alert transiting pilots of the activity and to exercise extra vigilance.

Comments: This recommendation affects

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MEETING 11-01: Mr. John Moore, FAA/AJV-3B, presented the issue on behalf of the submitter, Mr. Mark Payne, FAA/AJV-W2. The RD suggests a unique symbol be used for airspace that has been established as an aerobatic area on VFR Sectional Charts. At present, airspace that has been established as an aerobatic area is listed only in the A/FD in the Special Notices section, under the heading of "Aerobatic Practice Area".

Ms. Suzette Rash, FAA/AFS-410, commented on the process of how aerobatic areas are established and that the process is handled at a local level by the FSDO. Ms. Rash stated that aerobatic areas are temporary in nature and that such areas may exist from a minimum of one day to a maximum of two years and may only be active during certain hours. Active aerobatic areas are included in Weather/Pilot briefings from an FSS and they are NOTAM'd.

Mr. Ted Thompson, Jeppesen, inquired as to how aerobatic areas are entered into the A/FD. Ms. Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-3B, stated that such information is sourced internally by

memorandum only. Information is handled by NFDC but not entered in the NASR database nor distributed publicly in the NFDD.

ACTION: Mr. Bruce McGray, FAA/AFS-410, will follow up with Mr. Mark Payne, FAA/AJV-W2, and report back at next ACF.

MEETING 11-02: Mr. John Moore, FAA/AJV-3B, summarized the topic.

Mr. Bruce McGray, FAA/AFS-410, [reviewed current charting practices, showing examples](#) from the LAX and PHX TACs and Sectionals, where boxed notes appeared over areas for Aerobatic Training and Intense Flight Training areas.

Mr. Moore brought up for discussion of whether a symbol should be used versus a boxed note (current FAA practice). In addition, what criteria should be established for use of a symbol?

The group discussed the issues pertaining to the flow and maintenance of the information. Currently, the information is managed locally at the FSDO and Regional FAA offices. If the FAA is to utilize a symbol for depicting area used for Aerobatic Training and/or Intense Flight Training areas, criteria would have to be established for the use and depiction of such areas on FAA VFR Charts. It was suggested that the standards and data basing of information utilized for Parachute Jump areas could be applied to Aerobatic and Intense Flight Training areas.

Mr. Rick Fecht, FAA/AJV-321, stated that while working through the request on charting Aerobatic Areas, that the scope be expanded to flight training areas, specifically Student Training areas. The current request doesn't include Student Training areas in the original submission, but VCAM can expand the scope to include them that may be worth while.

Mr. Moore reframed the discussion within the following areas:

1. What is the scope of the issue – aerobatic only or also flight training areas?
2. VCAM was asked to research and report on:
 - a) Number of areas (Flight Training and Aerobatic Training Areas)
 - b) Source of information
 - c) What does the FAA currently chart (VFR Products Only)?
 - d) Maintenance of to Source to see if they are still in existence and Point of Contact information, validity of information
 - e) What are the geographic boundaries that define the Aerobatic/ Intense Flight Training areas?

Mr. Ted Thompson, Jeppesen, requested the FAA take steps to incorporate all training areas into the e-NASR database, with reference to the solution already implemented for inclusion of Parachute Jump Areas in e-NASR (re: previous ACF agenda item). This capability would provide improved capabilities for both the FAA and other users of the data. Ms. Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-3B, wholeheartedly supported Mr. Thompson's request that these areas (if required for charting), in addition to the currently charted Glider Operations areas, Ultra light Activity areas and Hang Glider Activity areas, be verified and disseminated by the AIM office.

Mr. Jordan Meek, Lido, brought to the groups attention that with respect to Aerobatic Areas, consideration should be taken into account for low level aerobatic areas (Waivers are for specific areas, low level) vs. those above 3,000 ft.

Mr. Moore asked that the representatives of the VCAM group (Mr. Ron Haag, FAA/AJV-321) to determine the scope and nature of the problem (availability of source, currency of source, dissemination of source, chart depictions, A/FD, etc.)

ACTION: Ms. Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-3B, to coordinate with FAA's AIS Working Group to represent the need to include ALL types of Training Areas in to e-NASR. The concept being put forward would be for all Aerobatic Training, Glider, etc, area to have the same data characteristics as those found with Parachute Jumping Areas.

ACTION: Ms. Valerie Watson, FAA/AJV-3B and Mr. Ron Haag, FAA/AJV-321, to report back at next ACF.

MEETING 12-01: She took the item to the Aeronautical Information Services Working Group (AISWG) for action. NFDC is now publishing these activity areas as NFDD "add-on" pages. The areas are not contained in the NASR database, but as a first step, at least the information is now being publicly disseminated by an official FAA source (NFDC).

Mr. Rick Fecht, FAA/AJV-321, briefed the ACF on actions within the Visual Charting Group regarding the possibility of using symbology to depict activity areas on visual charts. Research found that a total of 115 A/FD special notices are in effect pertaining to aerobatic and/or training areas. Mr. Fecht reported that of the 86 existing aerobatic areas, 84 have published dimensions which would allow their parameters to be charted. Eight aerobatic areas are identified by notes on the charts placed in the proximity of the area. Additionally, he reported that of the 29 existing training areas, 10 have published dimensions which would allow their parameters to be charted. Twenty-seven training areas are identified by notes on the charts placed in the proximity of the area.

Discussion was opened up as to whether aerobatic and training areas should be identified on the charts with symbology or should the current practice of "notes" remain in place. Feedback from the audience was that the current practice of using box notes was sufficient and, at least for the present and until such time as solid dimensional data could be obtained, databased & utilized, is the only viable option.

Doubts regarding the validity of many of these activity area entries was voiced. Many have been in publication for years and it is possible they are no longer in use. It was proposed that the currently published activity areas be vetted through the Service Areas to confirm their continued validity. When this has been accomplished, the group will return to the question of where (charts, A/FD) the information would best be provided.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Mr. Rick Fecht, FAA/AJV-321, to follow up on both training and aerobatic areas to see if the special notices are still pertinent and if these areas are still active.

MEETING 12-02:

Rick Fecht, FAA/AJV-321, provided an update on actions taken since last ACF. Rick stated that Visual had been in touch with the 3 Service Areas to solicit their input regarding the verification and update of existing areas in the Special Notices section of the AFD. Rick reported that all three Areas had submitted input, but that input has yet to be evaluated. Once the actual number of areas has been determined, the Visual Charting unit will investigate the possibility of charting. Rick will follow up.

STATUS: OPEN

ACTION: Rick Fecht, FAA/AJV-321, will provide an update at the next forum.