

not to exceed 50 hours TIS from the date of the last inspection or replacement installation:

(1) Visually inspect the adhesive bead around the perimeter of each abrasion strip for erosion, cracks, or blisters.

(2) Visually inspect the bond line between each abrasion strip and each blade skin for voids, separation, or lifting of the abrasion strip.

(3) Inspect each abrasion strip for debonding or hidden corrosion voids using a tap (ring) test as described in the applicable maintenance manual.

(b) If any deterioration of an abrasion strip adhesive bead is discovered, prior to further flight, restore the bead in accordance with the applicable maintenance manual.

(c) If abrasion strip debonding, separation, or a hidden corrosion void is found or suspected, prior to further flight, remove the blade with the defective abrasion strip and replace it with an airworthy blade.

(d) Repair of an affected blade's abrasion strip is considered a terminating action for the requirements of this AD. Identify the repaired blade with a white dot added adjacent to the blade S/N.

(e) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, New York Aircraft Certification Office, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, New York Aircraft Certification Office.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the New York Aircraft Certification Office.

(f) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the helicopter to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished, provided the abrasion strip has not started to separate or debond from the main rotor blade.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on November 3, 1998.

Mark R. Schilling,

*Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-30047 Filed 11-9-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**Federal Aviation Administration (FAA),
DOT**

14 CFR Part 71

[Airspace Docket No. 97-ASW-24]

Proposed Modification to the Gulf of Mexico High Offshore Airspace Area

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: This action proposes to amend the Gulf of Mexico High Offshore Airspace Area. The proposed action would extend the present airspace area east and south to the boundary of the Houston Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) Flight Information Region/Control Area (FIR/CTA). Additionally, this action proposes to increase the vertical limits of the proposed airspace area from Flight Level (FL) 280 up to and including FL 600. This proposed action would provide additional airspace in which domestic air traffic procedures may be used to separate and manage aircraft operations. This proposed change would enhance the efficient utilization of that airspace.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before December 29, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send comments on the proposal in triplicate to: Manager, Air Traffic Division, ASW-500, Docket No. 97-ASW-24, Federal Aviation Administration, 2601 Meacham Boulevard, Fort Worth, TX 76193-0001.

The official docket may be examined in the Rules Docket, Office of the Chief Counsel, Room 916, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC, weekdays, except Federal holidays, between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

An informal docket may also be examined during normal business hours at the office of the Regional Air Traffic Division, Federal Aviation Administration, 2601 Meacham Boulevard, Fort Worth, TX 76193-0001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Sheri Edgett Baron, Airspace and Rules Division, ATA-400, Office of Air Traffic Airspace Management, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591; telephone: (202) 267-8783.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested parties are invited to participate in this proposed rulemaking by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Comments that provide the factual basis supporting the views and suggestions presented are particularly helpful in developing reasoned regulatory decisions on the proposal. Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, aeronautical, economic, environmental, and energy-related aspects of the proposal.

Communications should identify the airspace docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address listed above. Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments on this notice must submit

with those comments a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made:

"Comments to Airspace Docket No. 97-ASW-24." The postcard will be date/time stamped and returned to the commenter. All communications received on or before the specified closing date for comments will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposal contained in this notice may be changed in light of comments received. All comments submitted will be available for examination in the Rules Docket both before and after the closing date for comments. A report summarizing each substantive public contact with FAA personnel concerned with this rulemaking will be filed in the docket.

Availability of NPRM's

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the Federal Aviation Administration, Office of Air Traffic Airspace Management, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591, or by calling (202) 267-8783. Communications must identify the notice number of this NPRM. Persons interested in being placed on a mailing list for future NPRM's should call the FAA's Office of Rulemaking, (202) 267-9677, for a copy of Advisory Circular No. 11-2A, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Distribution System, which describes the application procedure.

Background

On March 2, 1993, the FAA published a final rule (58 FR 12128) which, in part, redesignated certain control areas over international waters as offshore airspace areas. The redesignations were necessary to comply with the Airspace Reclassification final rule issued on December 17, 1991 (56 FR 65638).

One of the areas affected by the March 2, 1993, final rule was the Gulf of Mexico Control Area. This area was divided vertically into two areas, one of which was redesignated as the Gulf of Mexico High Offshore Airspace Area.

In June of 1996 the FAA completed an evaluation of the airspace over the Gulf of Mexico. The evaluation was a combined effort with representatives from the FAA, Servicios a la Navegacion en El Espacio Aereo Mexicano, and other airspace users. The objective of the evaluation was, in part, to identify areas where air traffic services, air traffic operations, and utilization of airspace could be improved. One conclusion of this evaluation was the determination that system capacity would be enhanced by modifying air traffic control (ATC) procedures used to control aircraft

operations in the airspace over the Gulf of Mexico.

Currently, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) oceanic ATC procedures are used to separate and manage aircraft operations that extend beyond the lateral boundary of the existing Gulf of Mexico High Offshore Airspace Area. Modifying the Gulf of Mexico High Offshore Airspace Area by extending the boundaries further east and south of the current location to the Houston ARTCC FIR/CTA, will allow the application of domestic ATC separation procedures over a larger area. This proposal to modify the offshore airspace area would enhance system capacity and allow for more efficient utilization of that airspace.

The Proposal

The FAA is proposing an amendment to part 71 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 71) to modify the Gulf of Mexico High Offshore Airspace Area, by extending the present airspace area east and south to the Houston ARTCC FIR/CTA. The proposed modification would allow the application of domestic ATC separation procedures, in lieu of ICAO separation procedures, enhancing system capacity, and allowing for more efficient use of the airspace.

Offshore airspace area designations are published in paragraph 2003 of FAA Order 7400.9F, dated September 10, 1998, and effective September 16, 1998, which is incorporated by reference in 14 CFR 71.1. The offshore airspace area designation listed in this document would be published subsequently in the Order.

The FAA has determined that this proposed regulation only involves an established body of technical regulations for which frequent and routine amendments are necessary to keep them operationally current. It, therefore: (1) Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034; February 26, 1979); and (3) does not warrant preparation of a Regulatory Evaluation as the anticipated impact is so minimal. Since this is a routine matter that will only affect air traffic procedures and air navigation, it is certified that this rule, when promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

ICAO Considerations

As part of this proposal relates to navigable airspace outside the United

States, this notice is submitted in accordance with the ICAO International Standards and Recommended Practices.

The application of International Standards and Recommended Practices by the FAA, Office of Air Traffic Airspace Management, in areas outside U.S. domestic airspace is governed by the Convention on International Civil Aviation. Specifically, the FAA is governed by Article 12 and Annex 11, which pertain to the establishment of necessary air navigational facilities and services to promote the safe, orderly, and expeditious flow of civil air traffic. The purpose of the document is to ensure that civil aircraft operations on international air routes are performed under uniform conditions.

The International Standards and Recommended Practices in Annex 11 apply to airspace under the jurisdiction of a contracting state, derived from ICAO. Annex 11 provisions apply when air traffic services are provided and a contracting state accepts the responsibility of providing air traffic services over high seas or in airspace of undetermined sovereignty. A contracting state accepting this responsibility may apply the International Standards and Recommended Practices that are consistent with standards and practices utilized in its domestic jurisdiction.

In accordance with Article 3 of the Convention, state owned aircraft are exempt from the Standards and Recommended Practices of Annex 11. The United States is a contracting state to the Convention. Article 3(d) of the Convention provides that participating state aircraft will be operated in international airspace with due regard for the safety of civil aircraft.

Since this action involves, in part, the designation of navigable airspace outside the United States, the Administrator is consulting with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 10854.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 71

Airspace, Incorporation by reference, Navigation (air).

The Proposed Amendment

In consideration of the foregoing, the FAA proposes to amend part 71 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 71) as follows:

PART 71—DESIGNATION OF CLASS A, CLASS B, CLASS C, CLASS D, AND CLASS E AIRSPACE AREAS; AIRWAYS; ROUTES; AND REPORTING POINTS

1. The authority citation for part 71 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40103, 40113, 40120; E.O. 10854, 24 FR 9565, 3 CFR, 1959–1963 Comp., p. 389.

§ 71.1 [Amended]

2. The incorporation by reference in 14 CFR 71.1 of the Federal Aviation Administration Order 7400.9F, Airspace Designations and Reporting Points, dated September 10, 1998, and effective September 16, 1998, is amended as follows:

Paragraph 2003 Offshore Airspace Areas

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Gulf of Mexico High [Revised]

That airspace extending upward from FL 280 to and including FL 600 bounded on the west, north, and east by a line 12 miles offshore and parallel to the Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida shorelines; bounded on the south from east to west by the southern boundary of the Jacksonville ARTCC, Miami Oceanic CTA/FIR; Merida UTA/FIR; Monterey UTA/UIR, Houston CTA/FIR; to the point of beginning, and that airspace extending upward from 18,000 feet MSL to and including FL 280 bounded on the west, north, and east by a line 12 miles offshore and parallel to the Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida shorelines bounded on the south from east to west by the southern boundary of the Jacksonville ARTCC, Miami Oceanic CTA/FIR, Houston CTA/FIR and lat. 26°00'00"N.

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Issued in Washington, DC, on November 2, 1998.

John S. Walker,

Program Director for Air Traffic Airspace Management.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Parts 91, 119, 121, 125, and 135

[Docket No. FAA–1998–4458; Notice No. 98–13]

RIN 2120–AG35

Prohibition on the Transportation of Devices Designed as Chemical Oxygen Generators as Cargo in Aircraft; Correction

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.