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# ADVISORY CIRCULAR

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

**SUBJECT:** OPERATIONS RESERVATIONS FOR HIGH-DENSITY TRAFFIC AIRPORTS

1. **PURPOSE.** This circular advises the aviation community of the means for all aircraft operators, except helicopters, scheduled and supplemental air carriers and scheduled air taxis to obtain a reservation to operate to and/or from designated high-density traffic airports. This circular updates Advisory Circular 90-43B, dated 20 January 1971, and includes changes in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 93, Subpart K. This change suspends reservations for Kennedy and O'Hare International Airports from 6 a.m. local time to 2:59 p.m. local time and from 8 p.m. local time to midnight local time.
2. **CANCELLATION.** Advisory Circular 90-43B, dated 20 January 1971, is cancelled.
3. **DEFINITIONS.**
  - a. **Reservation.** An authorization received in compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 93, to operate to and/or from a designated high-density traffic airport. Reservations are allocated on an hourly basis; however, an approved reservation does not constitute a warranty against traffic delays nor does it guarantee arrival and/or departure within such allocated hour. Such reservations constitute neither an air traffic control clearance nor the filing of required IFR flight plans, nor does the reservation constitute authority to violate any local restrictions. A reservation for a VFR operation constitutes the filing of a VFR flight plan as required by Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 93.125.
  - b. **Airport Reservations Office.** A facility operated by the Federal Aviation Administration to administer the issuance of IFR reservations in consonance with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 93.

- c. Flow Control. A service whereby the flow of IFR aircraft is regulated or restricted within an affected area or at an altitude stratum to the maximum number of aircraft which can be safely accommodated by the air traffic control system.

4. DISCUSSION.

- \* a. The Federal Aviation Administration, by Part 93, Subpart K, of the Federal Aviation Regulations, has designated the John F. Kennedy, La Guardia, Newark, O'Hare and Washington National Airports as high-density traffic airports and has prescribed air traffic rules and requirements for operating aircraft to and from these airports. The quota for Newark Airport has been suspended indefinitely; no reservations are required for IFR or VFR traffic. Reservations for Kennedy and O'Hare Airports have been reduced to the hours between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. local time. Excepting Newark Airport, each of the remaining airports is limited to the hourly number of allocated IFR operations that may be reserved for the specific classes of users for that airport. Additional operations may be authorized by air traffic control under certain conditions. An operation between the hours of 6 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. local time at Washington National and La Guardia Airports, and those hours previously specified for Kennedy and O'Hare Airports, may not be conducted to or from these airports unless a departure or arrival reservation has been obtained from air traffic control and a flight plan has been filed. However, a "mercy flight" involving a medical emergency to or from one of these airports will be handled within the air traffic control system without a reservation. Helicopter operations are excluded from the provisions of the rule. \*
- b. The Federal Aviation Administration has established the Airport Reservations Office to provide IFR reservation service for operations as designated high-density traffic airports. This office processes all IFR requests for reservations. VFR requests are handled procedurally at the high-sensity traffic airport locations and are discussed later.
- c. These IFR reservations are allotted on a "first-come-first-served" basis determined by the time the request is received at the reservations office. Standby lists are not maintained. To enable the operator to do his filing during normal business hours on normal business days, requests for a reservation for an IFR operation will be accepted any time after 6 a.m. local time on the day which is 48 hours in advance of the proposed operation. For example, a request for an 11 p.m. operation, as well as a request for a 6 a.m. operation, on a Friday would be accepted any time after 6 a.m. local time on a previous Wednesday. Furthermore, a reservation request for an IFR operation on Monday or Tuesday would be accepted any time after 6 a.m. local time the previous Friday.

These will be filled within the basic allotments; however, as weather and other factors will determine whether additional reservations in excess of the number allocated may be authorized, IFR requests in excess of the available basic allocation will normally not be approved prior to six hours in advance of the intended operation.

- d. An approved reservation does not constitute a warranty against traffic delays. It will be necessary in some instances to issue flow control restrictions which will meter air traffic to the affected airport at a lesser rate than the number for which reservations have been granted. Such system-induced delays which result in a pilot failing to make good his allocated time will not be grounds for cancellation of the reservation. It is also realized that a pilot that has planned his operation shortly after the beginning of an hour may occasionally find himself confronted with a situation whereby his operation is being conducted in the latter portion of the hour prior to the one in which he has his reservation. A pilot in this case need not obtain a new reservation for the hour in which the new operation is being conducted.
- e. The Airport Reservations Office will not provide dynamic scheduling. Assignments will be made on an hourly basis; e.g., an approved reservation for 1300 covers an operation any time between 1300 and 1359.
- f. The filing of a request for an IFR reservation does not constitute the filing of an IFR flight plan as required by Part 93, Subpart K, of the Federal Aviation Regulations. The IFR flight plan should be filed only after the reservation is obtained and should be filed through normal channels. The Airport Reservations Office is not equipped to accept or process IFR flight plans.

5. IFR PROCEDURES.

- a. A pilot may obtain an IFR reservation in either one of two ways. He may file his request with the nearest flight service station by any available means or telephone the Airport Reservations Office direct. If filed with a Flight Service Station, the specialist at this time will obtain information on how the pilot is to be notified of the results. Upon contacting the flight service station or Airport Reservations Office, a pilot may file arrival, departure and appropriate subsequent departure and arrival reservations with the same request. The telephone numbers for the following cities for direct contact to the Airport Reservations Office are as follows:

- (1) Washington D. C. . . . . 202-426-8920
- (2) New York, New York . . . . . 212-656-4177

- (3) Newark, New Jersey . . . . . 201-645-4370
- (4) Chicago, Illinois . . . . . 312-372-5215

These telephone numbers all terminate at the Airport Reservations Office in Washington, D. C. They may be used in the cities indicated for the cost of a local call, or a pilot not located in one of these cities should use the one for the city closest to him to reduce toll charges.

- b. When filing his request for an IFR reservation, the pilot should include the following information:

- (1) Aircraft identification.
- (2) Name/s of high-density traffic airport/s for which the pilot wishes reservation/s.
- (3) Date/s and hour/s of proposed operation/s at the high-density traffic airport/s.
  - (a) For arrivals -- estimated time of departure, point of departure and estimated time en route.
  - (b) For departures -- estimate time of departure.
- (4) Method for notifying the pilot of results (only collect long-distance telephone calls will be made by the flight service station).

- \* c. Should the requested time not be available, the closest available time, if agreeable, within a period of six hours after the requested time will be assigned. If no times are available within this period, then the closest available time, if agreeable, within a period of six hours before the requested time will be assigned. This will be considered as an assigned allocation unless subsequently cancelled by the pilot. \*

- d. Although pilots are encouraged to give cancellations to the Airport Reservations Office or any flight service station, an IFR reservation may be cancelled with any air traffic control facility and should include the following information:

- (1) Aircraft identification.
- (2) The airport for which the allocation was held.
- (3) The date and hour (Greenwich Mean Time) for which the reservation was granted.

- e. A pilot holding an IFR reservation must retain his IFR status until in contact with the terminal facility, otherwise he may be refused VFR handling in accordance with paragraphs 6b through 6e.
- f. Reservations are not needed when filing one of the high-density traffic airports as an alternate airport. Pilots are encouraged, however, to file airports other than the high-density traffic airports as alternate airports when possible.

6. VFR PROCEDURES.

- a. There will be no advance reservations for VFR arrivals. Unless he has obtained information as provided under paragraph 6c, below, the pilot should proceed toward his intended high-density traffic airport destination; however, he should at all times plan an alternate destination in case a reservation is not available upon arrival.
- b. Each high-density traffic airport terminal facility will handle VFR arrival requests. The pilot, when approximately 30 miles from the high-density traffic airport, should advise his request with the appropriate approach control by stating: "N . . . requesting VFR reservation for (time) arrival for . . . Airport." If a VFR reservation is available, the approach controller will provide the appropriate air traffic control services. If no reservations are available at that particular time, the approach controller will so advise the pilot. The pilot should then proceed to another airport of his choice. A pilot originating his flight within 30 miles of the high-density traffic airport may obtain recorded reservation information within 15 minutes prior to his departure by telephoning the high-density traffic airport terminal facility at the number listed in paragraph 6e. Being provided the appropriate air traffic control services by the approach controller constitutes the obtainment of a reservation and the filing of a flight plan as required by Federal Aviation Regulations, Parts 93.129(b) and 93.125(b), respectively.
- c. At any time a high-density traffic airport facility is not authorizing VFR operations, a Notice to Airmen to that effect will be issued by that facility. This information can be obtained from any flight service station or by referring to the high-density traffic airport teletype report. The code "VA" at the end of the weather report means that "VFR arrival reservations are available" at that particular airport. The code "VA" followed by a condition means that only conditional VFR arrival reservations are available; e.g., "VA 32" means that VFR arrival reservations are available on Runway 32. The code "VNA" means that VFR arrival reservations are not available. These codes will not be used when IFR weather conditions exist.

- d. VFR departure reservations, when available, are allotted directly by the high-density traffic airport facility. To determine whether VFR departure reservations are available, the pilot should first call the appropriate number as listed in paragraph 6e, below. Upon determining that VFR departure reservations are being granted, he should then contact the control tower on the appropriate frequency for his departure clearance. This contact and the receipt of the departure clearance fulfill the requirement for a VFR flight plan and the obtainment of a reservation as stated in Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 93.
  
- e. The following locations should be contacted prior to requesting departure clearance or an arrival clearance if originating within 30 miles of the high-density traffic airport to determine if VFR reservations are being granted:
  - (1) Washington National . . . . . 703-684-8229
  - (2) La Guardia . . . . . 212-478-9782
  - (3) Kennedy . . . . . 212-656-5373
  - (4) O'Hare . . . . . 312-686-2108
  
- f. The abbreviated flight plans referred to in paragraphs 6b and 6d above, are solely for the purpose of satisfying the requirements of Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 93.125(b). Pilots wishing to file full flight plans for search and rescue purposes should do so in the normal manner through normal channels.

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