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# Advisory Circular

**Subject:**

OPERATIONS RESERVATIONS FOR  
HIGH DENSITY TRAFFIC AIRPORTS  
(HDTA's)

**Date:** April 22, 1985

**Initiated by:** ATO-230

**AC No:** 90-43F

**Change:**

1. PURPOSE: This circular provides information for obtaining instrument and visual flight rule (IFR/VFR) reservations at the High Density Traffic Airports (HDTA's). For reservation purposes, user groups are classified as air carriers, commuters, and others. Scheduled air carriers/commuters obtain reservations for scheduled operations through scheduling committees; reservations for all other operations are obtained through the Airport Reservations Office (ARO).

2. CANCELLATION. Advisory Circular 90-43E, dated September 28, 1982, is cancelled.

3. DEFINITIONS.

a. Reservation. An authorization received in compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 93, to operate to and/or from a designated HDTA. A reservation is normally allocated on an hourly basis. However, at Chicago O'Hare and LaGuardia the total hourly reservation limit is further broken down to a 30-minute time period limit. A reservation flight may operate only within the approved hour or half hour, unless the flight encounters a traffic delay.

b. Airport Reservations Office. An operational unit of the Traffic Flow Management Branch responsible for administration of IFR reservations in accordance with FAR Part 93 and agency procedures issued thereunder.

c. Unscheduled Operation. An operation other than one regularly conducted by an air carrier or commuter between a high density airport and another service point. Certain types of air carrier/commuter operations are also considered as unscheduled. They include irregular charter and hired aircraft service and nonpassenger flights.

d. Additional Reservation. An approved IFR/VFR reservation above the maximum IFR reservation limit at an HDTA. Additional reservations are available for unscheduled operations only.

4. DISCUSSION.

a. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), by FAR Part 93, Subpart K, as amended, has designated the John F. Kennedy, LaGuardia, Chicago O'Hare, Washington National and Newark Airports as high density 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.) Reservations for Kennedy are required between 3 p.m. and 7:59 p.m. local time.

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Reservations at O'Hare are required between 6:45 a.m. and 9:15 p.m. local time. Reservations for LaGuardia and Washington National are required between 6 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. local time. Helicopter operations are excluded from the requirement for a reservation.

b. The FAA has established an ARO to receive and process all IFR requests for operations at designated HDTA's. This office, located at 800 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., monitors operation of the high density rule and allots reservations on a "first-come-first-served" basis determined by the time the request is received at the reservations office. Standby lists are not maintained. Requests for an IFR reservation will be accepted starting 48 hours prior to the proposed time of operation at the affected airport. For example, a request for an 11 a.m. reservation on a Thursday will be accepted beginning at 11 a.m. on the preceding Tuesday. An exception to the 48 hour limitation is made for weekends to recognize normal business hours. Consequently, a reservation request for an IFR operation on Monday would be accepted on the previous Thursday, starting at the proposed hour of operation. Similarly, requests for IFR operations on Tuesday would be accepted on the previous Friday, starting at the proposed hour of operation. For example, a request for an 11 a.m. reservation on Tuesday would be accepted beginning at 11 a.m. on Friday. If the previous Friday is an observed holiday, this procedure will be in effect on Thursday.

c. A maximum of two reservations per phone call will be accepted. That is, a pilot may request a reservation for an arrival and a departure during the same phone call, providing both fall on the same calendar day. For example, a reservation request for an 11 a.m. arrival on Friday and a 4 p.m. departure on Friday may be made beginning at 11 a.m. on Wednesday.

d. The ARO will not provide scheduling according to planned departure/arrival time. Assignments will be made on an hourly or 30-minute basis, e.g., an approved reservation for 1300 covers an operation any time between 1300 and 1359 and an approved reservation for 0845 at O'Hare covers an operation between 0845 and 0914.

e. An approved reservation does not constitute a warranty against traffic delays nor does it guarantee arrival and/or departure within such allocated hours. Also, a reservation does not constitute an air traffic control (ATC) clearance.

f. The filing of a request for an IFR reservation does not constitute the filing of an IFR flight plan as required by regulation. The IFR flight plan should be filed only after the reservation is obtained and should be filed through normal channels. The ARO is not equipped to accept or process IFR flight plans.

g. Amendments or adjustments to ARO procedures will be announced by NOTAM.

## 5. IFR RESERVATIONS.

a. If operating IFR, an IFR reservation is required prior to takeoff for any operation to or from a high density airport.

b. When requesting an IFR reservation from the ARO, pilots/operators are asked to share the limited available communication line capacities by restricting personal and corporate telephone reservation requests to a minimum. Your cooperation is likely to improve overall HDTA accessibility, relieve congestion on busy telephone lines, and thereby reduce service waiting time.

c. A pilot of an operation which is other than that of a scheduled air carrier or commuter may obtain an IFR reservation in either one of two ways. He may file his request with the nearest flight service station (FSS) by any available means or telephone the ARO direct. If filed with an FSS, the FSS specialist will obtain information on how the pilot is to be notified of the results of his request.

The telephone numbers for direct contact to the ARO in Washington, D.C., are as follows:

Washington, DC	202-488-1491
New York, NY	718-632-7806
Chicago, IL	312-263-2575
All other areas	202-426-9347

These telephone numbers all terminate at the ARO 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 can use the one for the closest city to reduce toll charges.

d. When filing a request for an IFR reservation, the pilot should be prepared to provide the following information in this order:

(1) Name(s) of high density traffic airport(s) for which the pilot wishes reservation(s).

(2) Dates(s) and hour(s) of proposed operations(s) at the high density traffic airports(s).

(a) For arrivals

Departure airport  
Estimated time of arrival at HDTA  
Estimated time enroute

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## (b) For departures

Airport of first intended landing  
Estimated departure time from HDTA  
Estimated time enroute

## (3) Aircraft identification.

(4) Method for notifying the pilot of results (only collect long distance telephone calls will be made by the FSS).

e. Should the requested time not be available, the closest mutually agreeable time before or after the requested time will be assigned. This will be considered as an assigned allocation unless subsequently cancelled by the pilot.

f. Pilots are encouraged to advise the ARO whenever they need to change their reservation or to cancel their IFR reservation when it is known that the reservation will not be used. For other than scheduled air carriers/ commuters, a cancellation should be made directly to the ARO or any FSS.

Scheduled air carrier/commuter cancellations are normally processed through the scheduling committees. The following information should be included when cancelling an IFR reservation with ARO or an FSS:

## (1) Aircraft identification.

## (2) The airport for which the reservation was held.

(3) The date and time period (Greenwich Mean Time) for which the reservation was granted.

g. To assure retention of a reservation, a pilot holding an IFR arrival reservation must retain his IFR status until in contact with the terminal facility.

h. Reservations are required when filing one of the high density airports as an alternate airport. Pilots are encouraged to file airports other than the high density as alternate airports.

6. ADDITIONAL IFR RESERVATIONS.

a. If favorable conditions in the system and at the HDTA indicate that significant delay is not likely in the short term, the Central Flow Control Facility coordinates with the HDTA tower to determine any additional IFR reservation that may be accommodated for a specific time period. This is an "additional" IFR reservation as described in FAR Part 93. If additional IFR reservations can be accommodated, they are administered by the ARO under procedures described in 5. above.

b. An operator of an IFR unscheduled operation may take off or land an aircraft without regard to the maximum allocation if a reservation is obtained from ATC in accordance with the procedures of 5. above. A reservation is granted for an additional IFR operation only if it can be accommodated by ATC without significant additional delay to operations already allocated.

c. Please remember that the granting of an additional IFR reservation is contingent upon dynamic, short-term traffic and weather conditions. Generally, availability of additional reservations will not be known more than 1-3 hours in advance of current time. If available, IFR additional reservations will be granted on a first-come-first-served basis.

d. An operator who has been unable to obtain a reservation under the normal 48 hours in advance procedure may find that he is able to obtain a reservation on the scheduled day of operation when additional reservations can be authorized.

#### 7. VFR RESERVATIONS.

a. The operator of a VFR unscheduled operation may take off or land an aircraft under VFR at an HDTA if a departure or arrival reservation is obtained from the ATC facility serving the HDTA.

b. Under FAR, Part 93, a VFR operation is considered to be an "additional" operation. VFR additional operations are granted by ATC if they can be accommodated without significant additional delay to operations already allocated. In addition, the reported ceiling at the HDTA must be at least 1,000 feet and the reported ground visibility at least 3 miles.

c. Each HDTA lies within a Group I terminal control area (TCA). A clearance from ATC to enter the TCA or depart the airport under VFR constitutes an approval for a VFR additional reservation.

d. At any time an HDTA is not authorizing VFR operations, a Notice to Airmen to that effect will be issued by that facility and a statement carried on the Automatic Terminal Information Service. This information can be obtained from any FSS or by referring to the HDTA teletype weather report. The code "VNA" at the end of the weather report means that VFR arrival reservations are not authorized. This indication will not be made when IFR weather conditions exist.

8. COMPLIANCE. The requirements for obtaining reservations pursuant to FAR 93, Subpart K, are mandatory. Failure to operate in accordance with the FAR is grounds for enforcement action.

  
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Director, Air Traffic Operations Service