



AC NO: 90-54A

DATE: 11/27/73

TAD-494.4

ADVISORY CIRCULAR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: CRUISE CLEARANCES

1. PURPOSE.

This Advisory Circular provides the aviation community guidance when operating under a "cruise" clearance.

2. CANCELLATION.

Advisory Circular No. 90-54, Cruise Clearances, is cancelled.

3. RELATED DOCUMENTS.

- a. Terminal Air Traffic Control Handbook 7110.8C.
- b. En Route Air Traffic Control Handbook 7110.9C.
- c. Airman's Information Manual.
- d. Federal Aviation Regulations.

4. DISCUSSION.

A "cruise" clearance is an air traffic control clearance issued by air traffic controllers to pilots in order to reduce communications, workload, conserve fuel and afford the pilot with flexibility in his operation. Because questions have arisen as to controller application and pilot action/responsibility while operating on such clearances, the procedure has been rewritten. The amended procedure authorizes the pilot to climb and descend in a block of airspace but prohibits climb when the pilot starts descent and reports leaving an

altitude in the block. It also provides the means for the pilot to use the provisions of the Federal Aviation Regulations when proceeding to an airport that is within/below/outside controlled airspace with or without a prescribed/approved instrument approach procedure while retaining search and rescue protection.

5. PROCEDURES.

a. To ensure complete understanding between pilot and controller, the following will be included in the Airman's Information Manual and the air traffic control handbooks:

"Cruise—A word used in an ATC clearance to authorize a pilot to conduct flight at any altitude from the MEA/MOCA up to and including the altitude specified in the clearance. The pilot may level off at any intermediary altitude within this block of airspace. Climb/descent within the block is to be made at the discretion of the pilot. Once the pilot starts descent and reports leaving an altitude in the block, he may not return to that altitude without additional ATC clearance. Further, it is approval for a pilot to proceed to and make an approach at destination airport and can be used in conjunction with (1) an airport clearance limit at locations with an approved/prescribed instrument approach procedure provided

the instrument letdown is conducted in accordance with FAR requirements for that airport, or (2) an airport clearance limit at locations that are within/below/outside controlled airspace and without an approved/prescribed instrument approach procedure. Such a clearance is NOT AUTHORIZATION for the pilot to descend under IFR conditions below applicable MEA/MOCA nor does it imply that ATC is exercising control over aircraft in uncontrolled airspace. It does provide a means for the aircraft to proceed to destination airport, descend and

land in accordance with applicable FARs governing VFR flight operations. Also, this provides search and rescue protection until such time as the VFR flight plan is closed."

6. MISCELLANEOUS.

In order to provide the broadest exposure to the contents of this Advisory Circular, organizations which publish bulletins to their members are requested to include in such bulletins any part or all of the foregoing material.


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