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ADVISORY CIRCULAR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE HANDLING
OF HIGH PERFORMANCE AIRCRAFT

1. PURPOSE. This Advisory Circular describes ATC handling of high performance aircraft in terminal areas. It is designed to familiarize pilots with the keep-'em-high procedures so that total effectiveness of the program may be realized.
 2. RELATED DOCUMENTS.
 - a. Airman's Information Manual, Parts I and IV.
 - b. FAA Order 7110.22A, Arrival and Departure Handling of High Performance Aircraft.
 3. DISCUSSION.
 - a. The FAA Near Midair Collision Report of 1968 revealed that a high percentage of terminal near midair collisions occur below 8,000 feet within 30 miles of an airport with a control tower. The most critical area of this airspace is at the lower altitudes which are extensively used by controlled and uncontrolled aircraft. In an effort to reduce the number of incidents of this nature, the FAA developed a program which is designed to minimize exposure of controlled arriving and departing high performance aircraft in the terminal area. It is commonly referred to as the "Keep-'em-High" program. The procedures have been in effect for about one year and they have proven to be an effective noise abatement program in addition to reducing the time that high performance aircraft are exposed to uncontrolled aircraft at lower altitudes.
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- b. The keep-'em-high program requires terminal airspace be configured so that high performance aircraft enter the terminal area at 10,000 feet and remain at that altitude as long as possible before beginning descent to 5,000 feet above airport elevation. Descent below the 5,000 foot altitude begins when the arrival enters the descent area established for the landing direction. Departing aircraft are climbed to the highest altitude filed by the pilot as soon as possible after takeoff. In keeping with this program, controllers will not initiate clearances to arriving and departing high performance aircraft which will place them at lower altitudes commonly used by uncontrolled aircraft. Routine pilot requests for altitudes below 5,000 feet above airport elevation will not be honored until the aircraft has entered the descent area established for the landing runway. At non-radar approach control facilities exceptions are made to provide the controller flexibility in accommodating lower altitude requests within specific parameters.
 - c. To assist VFR pilots, FAA facility chiefs will normally issue Facility Bulletins explaining the program and describing local procedures. It will be accompanied by a graphic notice depicting descent areas and normal arrival and departure routes. These charts are designed to help VFR pilots to identify areas and routes that are normally used by high performance aircraft. Avoiding these areas will result in a higher degree of safety in the terminal area.
4. APPLICABILITY. As used in this program, high performance aircraft means turbojets and large turboprops that file IFR at 5,000 feet AGL or above. In most cases the formal facility bulletin will be issued. At the lower density locations the keep-'em-high procedures will be applied by controllers without a formal advertising program. Since these procedures are designed for safety enhancement and noise relief for airport neighbors, they will be applied at all times by air traffic controllers except when different altitudes are necessary due to unusual circumstances, e.g., turbulent conditions, thunder-storm activity, local noise abatement requirements, aircraft emergencies, etc.
5. MISCELLANEOUS. The FAA believes this program enhances safety and affords significant noise relief to our airport neighbors. Pilots of high performance aircraft, when flying IFR, are urged to cooperate with Air Traffic Control. When pilots of these particular aircraft are flying VFR they are encouraged to abide by the keep-'em-high philosophy, i.e.,

remain as high as possible as long as possible. Pilots of other VFR aircraft are urged to avoid, to the extent possible, the routes and descent areas most frequently used by high performance aircraft in the terminal area. When these areas must be traversed, extreme vigilance should be exercised by VFR pilots. Although controllers will abide by the established keep-'em-high procedures most of the time, there are times, as mentioned earlier, when deviations will be required.



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