



ADVISORY CIRCULAR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: STRAIGHT-IN NONPRECISION INSTRUMENT APPROACH
PROCEDURES VISUAL DESCENT POINT (VDP)

1. **PURPOSE.** This advisory circular describes the concept, purpose, and use of a designated and published Visual Descent Point (VDP) to be provided on some straight-in nonprecision instrument approach procedures.
 2. **REFERENCE.** The United States Standard for Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPs) contains the criteria for designating and identifying VDPs.
 3. **CONCEPT.** Historically, the pilot in the course of flying a nonprecision approach has had no means of determining when he had arrived at that point where a normal (approximately 3°) descent to land would be commenced, provided the required visual references were established. Consequently, nonprecision approaches have been typified by either early or late descents from MDA depending on when visual reference was established. Both of these situations are undesirable. The pilot has had to rely solely on his judgment and experience regarding the proper point at which to begin descent from MDA once visual reference is acquired. The FAA has therefore considered, with the assistance of the U.S. Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPs) Advisory Committee, the possibility of electronically marking that point on a nonprecision approach final course where an approximate 3° descent path intercepts the MDA. A decision has now been made to proceed with such marking on certain nonprecision straight-in approaches and funds have been budgeted for additional DMEs and 75 MHz markers to identify this point which will be known as the VDP. Many existing procedures will be revised to mark the VDP at locations where navigational facilities already exist; i.e., existing VOR/DME procedures.
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4. APPLICATION. The VDP is a defined point on the final approach course of a nonprecision straight-in approach procedure from which normal descent from the MDA to the runway touchdown point may be commenced, provided visual reference required by FAR §91.117(b) is established. If a straight-in nonprecision approach procedure incorporates a VDP, it shall be identified by an approved electronic navigational aid. DME will normally be used for VOR and LOC BC approaches. A 75 MHz marker will be used for NDB approaches and where DME cannot be implemented. VDPs will not normally be established for runways served by precision approach aids. VDPs are not a mandatory part of nonprecision approach procedures but are intended to provide additional guidance where they are implemented. A VASI will normally be installed on those runways served by a nonprecision approach that incorporates a VDP.
5. FLYING THE PROCEDURE WITH A VDP. No special technique is required to fly a procedure that has a VDP incorporated in it. The pilot will fly the procedure in a normal manner from the final approach fix to a landing or the missed approach point. The pilot should not descend below the MDA prior to reaching the VDP. Acquisition of the required visual reference prior to reaching the VDP should alert the pilot that he has not yet reached the point from which a normal descent path (approximately 3°) intersects the MDA. Conversely, reaching the VDP prior to acquiring the required visual reference should alert the pilot to the likelihood of a missed approach. Pilots not equipped to receive the VDP should fly the procedure as though no VDP had been provided.
6. CHARTING OF VDPs. On nonprecision straight-in approach procedures where VDPs are provided, the location of the VDP and the type of facility identifying it will be indicated on the approach chart.

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