

the CFR that affect interstate aviation in Alaska, to consider the extent to which Alaska is not served by transportation modes other than aviation, and to establish such regulatory distinctions as he or she considers appropriate. The FAA considers that this rule will be beneficial to operations in Alaska.

Environmental Analysis

FAA Order 1050.1D defines FAA actions that may be categorically excluded from preparation of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental impact statement. In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1D, appendix 4, paragraph 4(j), SFAR 97 qualifies for a categorical exclusion.

Energy Impact

The energy impact of the notice has been assessed in accordance with the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) Public Law 94-163, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6362) and FAA Order 1053.1. We have determined that SFAR 97 is not a major regulatory action under the provisions of the EPCA.

Justification for Immediate Adoption

Because this final rule is optional, that is, operators in Alaska may choose to meet the equipment and operational requirements of SFAR 97 or comply with the current regulations, the FAA finds that this SFAR may be adopted without meeting the required minimum 30-day notice period. The effective date for SFAR 97, March 13, 2003, is based, in part, on route charting dates for southeast Alaska and delay beyond that date would incur additional expense to the Government and be detrimental to operators.

List of Subjects

14 CFR Part 71

Airspace, Navigation (air).

14 CFR Part 91

Agriculture, Air traffic control, Aircraft, Airmen, Airports, Aviation safety, Canada, Freight, Mexico, Noise control, Political candidates, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

14 CFR Part 95

Air traffic control, Airspace, Alaska, Navigation (air), Puerto Rico.

14 CFR Part 121

Air carriers, Aircraft, Airmen, Aviation safety, Charter flights, Drug testing, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Safety, Transportation.

14 CFR Part 125

Aircraft, Airmen, Aviation safety, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

14 CFR Part 129

Air carriers, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Security, Smoking.

14 CFR Part 135

Air taxis, Aircraft, Airmen, Aviation safety, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

The Amendment

In consideration of the foregoing, the Federal Aviation Administration amends Chapter I of Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, as follows:

PART 71—DESIGNATION OF CLASS A, CLASS B, CLASS C, CLASS D, AND CLASS E AIRSPACE AREAS; AIRWAYS; ROUTES; AND REPORTING POINTS

1. The authority citation for part 71 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40103, 40113, 40120, E.O. 10854, 24 FR 9565, 3 CFR, 1959-1963 Comp., p. 389.

PART 91—GENERAL OPERATING AND FLIGHT RULES

2. The authority citation for Part 91 Continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 1155, 40103, 40113, 40120, 44101, 44111, 44701, 44709, 44711, 44712, 44715, 44716, 44717, 44722, 46306, 46315, 46316, 46504, 46506-46507, 47122, 47508, 47528-47531, articles 12 and 29 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (61 stat. 1180).

3. Amend parts 71, 91, 95, 121, 125, 129, and 135 by adding SFAR No. 97. The full text will appear in part 91.

Special Federal Aviation Regulation No. 97—Special Operating Rules for the Conduct of Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) Area Navigation (RNAV) Operations using Global Positioning Systems (GPS) in Alaska

Those persons identified in Section 1 may conduct IFR en route RNAV operations in the State of Alaska and its airspace on published air traffic routes using TSO C145a/C146a navigation systems as the only means of IFR navigation. Despite contrary provisions of parts 71, 91, 95, 121, 125, and 135 of this chapter, a person may operate aircraft in accordance with this SFAR if the following requirements are met.

Section 1. Purpose, use, and limitations

a. This SFAR permits TSO C145a/C146a GPS (RNAV) systems to be used

for IFR en route operations in the United States airspace over and near Alaska (as set forth in paragraph c of this section) at Special Minimum En Route Altitudes (MEA) that are outside the operational service volume of ground-based navigation aids, if the aircraft operation also meets the requirements of sections 3 and 4 of this SFAR.

b. Certificate holders and part 91 operators may operate aircraft under this SFAR provided that they comply with the requirements of this SFAR.

c. Operations conducted under this SFAR are limited to United States Airspace within and near the State of Alaska as defined in the following area description:

From 62°00'00.000"N, Long. 141°00'00.00"W.; to Lat. 59°47'54.11"N., Long. 135°28'38.34"W.; to Lat. 56°00'04.11"N., Long. 130°00'07.80"W.; to Lat. 54°43'00.00"N., Long. 130°37'00.00"W.; to Lat. 51°24'00.00"N., Long. 167°49'00.00"W.; to Lat. 50°08'00.00"N., Long. 176°34'00.00"W.; to Lat. 45°42'00.00"N., Long. -162°55'00.00"E.; to Lat. 50°05'00.00"N., Long. -159°00'00.00"E.; to Lat. 54°00'00.00"N., Long. -169°00'00.00"E.; to Lat. 60°00'00.00"N., Long. -180°00'00.00"E; to Lat. 65°00'00.00"N., Long. 168°58'23.00"W.; to Lat. 90°00'00.00"N., Long. 00°00'00.00"W.; to Lat. 62°00'00.000"N, Long. 141°00'00.00"W.

(d) No person may operate an aircraft under IFR during the en route portion of flight below the standard MEA or at the special MEA unless the operation is conducted in accordance with sections 3 and 4 of this SFAR.

Section 2. Definitions and abbreviations

For the purposes of this SFAR, the following definitions and abbreviations apply.

Area navigation (RNAV). RNAV is a method of navigation that permits aircraft operations on any desired flight path.

Area navigation (RNAV) route. RNAV route is a published route based on RNAV that can be used by suitably equipped aircraft.

Certificate holder. A certificate holder means a person holding a certificate issued under part 119 or part 125 of this chapter or holding operations specifications issued under part 129 of this chapter.

Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS). GNSS is a world-wide position and time determination system that uses satellite ranging signals to determine user location. It encompasses all satellite ranging technologies, including