

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Aviation Administration****14 CFR Parts 91 and 93**

[Docket No. FAA-2002-14149; SFAR No. 101]

RIN 2120-AH92

Special Air Traffic Rules in the Vicinity of Los Angeles International Airport**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.**ACTION:** Final rule.

SUMMARY: In this action, the FAA revises and codifies Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) No. 51-1, Special Flight Rules in the Vicinity of the Los Angeles International Airport. Specifically, this action changes the northern boundary of the Los Angeles Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA), established by SFAR No. 51-1, to align the area with the Los Angeles Class B airspace area revisions adopted in 1997. Also, this action revises the description of the SFRA airspace to clarify the requirement to operate at fixed altitudes. The FAA is taking this action to reduce the potential for climb/descent conflicts, to ensure compatibility with current traffic flows, and to increase overall system efficiency and safety.

DATES: This SFAR is effective December 25, 2003, and shall remain in effect until further notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ken McElroy, Airspace and Rules Division, ATA-400, Office of Air Traffic Airspace Management, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20591; telephone (202) 267-8783.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Availability of Rulemaking Documents**

You can get an electronic copy of this document using the Internet by:

- (1) Using the docket number of this rulemaking action to search the Department of Transportation's electronic Docket Management System (DMS) Web page (<http://dms.dot.gov/search>);
- (2) Visiting the Office of Rulemaking's Web page at <http://www.faa.gov/avr/arm/index.cfm>; or
- (3) Accessing the Government Printing Office's web page at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/aces140.html.

You can also get a copy by submitting a request to the Federal Aviation Administration, Office of Rulemaking, ARM-1, 800 Independence Avenue

SW., Washington, DC 20591, or by calling (202) 267-9680. Make sure to identify the amendment number or docket number of this rulemaking.

Anyone can search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

The Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA) of 1996 requires FAA to comply with small entity requests for information or advice about compliance with statutes and regulations within its jurisdiction. Therefore, any small entity that has a question regarding this document may contact its local FAA official, or the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. You can find out more about SBREFA on the Internet at, or by e-mailing us at 9-AWA-SBREFA@faa.gov.

Background/Related Rulemaking

The FAA issued SFAR No. 51-1, in February, 1988 to provide visual flight rule (VFR) pilots with a safe and direct north/south route through the Los Angeles (LAX) Terminal Control Area (TCA). Specifically, SFAR No. 51-1 allows pilots operating under VFR to fly through the Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA) without contacting air traffic control personnel provided specific conditions are met. The conditions include use of certain equipment and lights, operating below a maximum airspeed, and flying at fixed altitudes.

In 1993, the FAA reclassified airspace terminology and replaced the term TCA with Class B Airspace Area (56 FR 65638, December 17, 1991). In 1997, the FAA implemented modifications to the Los Angeles Class B airspace area. However, this action did not re-define the SFAR No. 51-1 airspace area (61 FR 66902, December 19, 1996).

On December 31, 2002, the FAA published in the **Federal Register** a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to codify SFAR No. 51-1, Special Flight Rules in the Vicinity of the Los Angeles International Airport. The proposed action would change the northern boundary of the Los Angeles SFRA, established by SFAR No. 51-1, and align the area with the Los Angeles Class B airspace area revisions adopted

in 1997. The proposed action also revises the description of the SFRA airspace to make the requirement to operate at fixed altitudes clearer. The FAA proposed this action to reduce the potential for climb/descent conflicts, to ensure compatibility with current traffic flows, and to increase overall system efficiency and safety.

Interested parties were invited to participate in this rulemaking effort by submitting written communication on the proposal. The comment period for this action closed on February 14, 2003. The FAA received nine comments that are discussed below.

Discussion of Comments

One commenter responding to the NPRM requested that the FAA clarify the changes proposed. The commenter also questioned whether the northern boundary of the airspace was being moved further from LAX. Finally, the commenter stated that the constant altitude requirement is already understood and did not need any further clarification.

As discussed in the NPRM, one purpose of this rulemaking action is to re-align the northern boundary of the SFAR No. 51-1 area to coincide with the Los Angeles Class B airspace area revision that was implemented in 1997. As a result of the 1997 Class B airspace rulemaking action, the northern boundary of the Class B airspace area was moved south, closer to LAX. However, no similar action was taken to redefine the SFAR 51-1 area. This rulemaking action corrects that discrepancy and moves the SFAR area boundary south closer to LAX, realigning with the northern boundary of the Class B airspace area. This boundary move provides additional Class E airspace for VFR aircraft operations north of the SFAR area. Regarding the constant altitude requirement, the FAA biennial study of the LAX Class B operations concluded that the regulatory language description of the SFAR should be revised. The study revealed the SFAR language could be misunderstood by pilots to imply that they could climb or descend while in the area because it used the words "inclusive" and "between" when describing the boundaries. Removing the words "inclusive" and "between" does not change the current operating procedures within the LAX SFAR area.

The FAA received five comments from individuals concerning the single VOR radial that pilots must fly and a perceived lateral width reduction of the airspace. The commenters would like the guidance provided in the Los Angeles Terminal Area chart included