

instrument approaches do not currently exist * * * (2) The use of satellite-based voice communications and satellite-based, Mode S, or VHF data link (for aircraft position and altitude) between aircraft in flight and air traffic controllers * * * (4) The use of currently uncontrolled airspace for IFR departures, en route flight, and instrument approaches in the demonstration program region * * *

From the time of its conception, the FAA Alaskan Region's Capstone Program has been an accelerated effort to improve aviation safety and efficiency. Capstone will further the program through installation of GPS based avionics and data link communications suites in most commercial aircraft serving Southeast Alaska. Up to 200 aircraft will be equipped. Compatible ground systems, equipment, and services will also be provided. The name "Capstone" is derived from the program's effect of drawing and holding together concepts and recommendations contained in reports from the Radio Telecommunications Conference of America (RTCA), the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the MITRE Corporation's Center for Advanced Aviation System Development (CAASD), and Alaskan aviation industry representatives. In addition to the avionics suites, Capstone

will deploy a ground infrastructure for weather observation, data link communications, surveillance, and Flight Information Services (FIS) to improve safety and enable implementation of new procedures.

Under the Capstone program, the FAA will develop Area Navigation (RNAV) GPS-based instrument approach and departure procedures to remote communities, including those serviced by seaplanes, such as Angoon. In addition, the FAA will develop an enroute IFR structure in Southeast Alaska that will be available to suitably equipped and trained IFR commercial and private operators. This enroute structure will provide GPS low altitude routes that access existing public and Special instrument approach and departure procedures at Ketchikan, Klawock, Wrangell, Petersburg, Kake, Sitka, and Juneau. The minimum enroute altitudes available on the segments of the Capstone enroute routes will be significantly lower than those available on the public Federal Airway system. In the future, additional IAPs will be considered for development for additional airports and waterlanes in Southeast Alaska.

The purpose of this proposal is to create controlled airspace within Southeast Alaska that is sufficient to

contain the new IFR enroute and terminal procedures being developed by the Capstone program. This controlled airspace is needed to provide air traffic control services for the new enroute and terminal public and special instrument procedures. If this action is adopted, it will enhance flight safety by reducing the potential for midair collisions, provide more accurate aircraft navigation, enable flight tracking for ATC and commercial operators, provide better communications, enable transfer of weather and flight information between pilots and ATC, enable surveillance and the use of radar separation standards for ATC IFR separation and tracking, and will improve access to airports in Southeast Alaska.

The proposed new Class E airspace in areas that are currently Class G airspace will have an impact on pilot's flight visibility and cloud avoidance requirements when flying under Visual Flight Rules (VFR), during the day above 1,200 feet AGL. The flight visibility requirement for VFR operations in the new Class E airspace below 10,000 feet MSL will increase to three (3) statute miles. VFR weather minimums are shown in the following table extracted from 14 CFR 91.155 Basic VFR weather minimums:

BASIC VFR WEATHER MINIMUMS

	Flight visibility	Distance from clouds
Class G (Uncontrolled)		
1,200 feet or less AGL, day	1 statute mile	Clear of Clouds.
1,200 feet or less AGL, night	3 statute miles	500 feet below, 1,000 feet above, 2,000 feet horizontal.
1,200 feet or more and less than 10,000 feet MSL, day	1 statute miles	500 feet below, 1,000 feet above, 2,000 feet horizontal.
1,200 feet or more and less than 10,000 feet MSL, night	3 statute miles	500 feet below, 1,000 feet above, 2,000 feet horizontal.
More than 1,200 feet AGL and at or above 10,000 feet MSL.	5 statute miles	1,000 feet below, 1,000 feet above, 1 statute mile horizontal.
Class E (Controlled)		
Less than 10,000 feet MSL	3 statute miles	500 feet below, 1,000 feet above, 2,000 feet horizontal.
At or above 10,000 feet MSL	5 statute miles	1,000 feet below, 1,000 feet above, 1 statute mile horizontal.

The area would be depicted on aeronautical charts for pilot reference. The coordinates for this airspace docket are based on North American Datum 83. The Class E airspace areas designated as 700/1200 foot transition areas are published in paragraph 6005 in FAA Order 7400.9L, *Airspace Designations and Reporting Points*, dated September 2, 2003, and effective September 16, 2003, which is incorporated by reference in 14 CFR 71.1. The Class E airspace designations listed in this

document would be published subsequently in the Order.

The FAA has determined that this proposed regulation only involves an established body of technical regulations for which frequent and routine amendments are necessary to keep them operationally current. It, therefore—(1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034; February 26, 1979); and (3) does not warrant

preparation of a regulatory evaluation as the anticipated impact is so minimal. Since this is a routine matter that will only affect air traffic procedures and air navigation, it is certified that this rule, when promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 71

Airspace, Incorporation by reference, Navigation (air).