

TCAS events were reported by air carrier aircraft and reflected possible conflicts with non-ATC controlled visual flight rules (VFR) aircraft.

Other action taken outside of this proposal in an effort to better accommodate the increase in aircraft operations was the installation of a precision runway monitor (PRM). The PRM allows for simultaneous ILS approaches. In 1998, the PRM was installed to facilitate simultaneous ILS approaches to closely spaced parallel runways (Runway 12L/30R and 30L/12R) using minimum separation between arriving aircraft. Although this has increased airport capacity, during peak operations, high performance aircraft must frequently intercept the localizers for ILS approaches to the above runways more than 20 nautical miles (NM) from MSP at 4,000 feet above mean sea level (MSL) and 5,000 feet MSL. This results in aircraft initiating approach procedures outside of the confines of the current MSP Class B airspace area. Also, a new runway, scheduled to be opened in November 2004, is under construction. The new runway (17/35) will provide increased airport capacity. However, aircraft conducting instrument operations to this new runway would also frequently need to intercept the instrument approaches outside the Class B airspace area if the current Class B airspace area is not expanded. The proposed Class B airspace modification will address this matter.

Public Input

As announced in Letter to Airmen No. 00-02 and in the **Federal Register** (65 FR 64642), informal airspace meetings were held on January 9, 2001, at the Army Aviation Support Facility, St. Paul, MN, and on January 13, 2001, at the Flying Cloud Hennepin Technical College, Eden Prairie, MN.

These meetings allowed interested airspace users an opportunity to present their views and offer suggestions regarding planned modifications to the MSP Class B airspace area. All comments received during the informal airspace meetings and the subsequent comment periods were considered in developing this proposal.

Analysis of Comments Received

Seven commenters ask questions or volunteered to participate in the aeronautical study process.

Four commenters, three general aviation pilots and Northwest Airlines, concurred with the proposal.

Three commenters, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the Experimental Aircraft Association

(EAA), and the Airline Pilot's Association suggested raising the base altitude between 20 NM and 30 NM from the Minneapolis-St. Paul International (Wold-Chamberlain) Airport Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) Antenna (I-MSP) and developing extensions at lower altitudes to the east and west of MSP to accommodate aircraft conducting simultaneous operations to the parallel runways. The FAA agrees with these comments and has changed the planned modifications to reflect these suggestions.

Sixty-five commenters stated that the planned modifications would require pilots to fly farther to conduct training and would compress VFR aircraft operations into a smaller area. One of these commenters also stated an opposition to raising the ceiling from 8,000 feet MSL to 10,000 feet MSL. The FAA has determined that some aircraft would have to fly farther or at lower (or higher) altitudes to remain clear of the planned MSP Class B airspace area; however, this is necessary to separate them from large turbine-powered aircraft arriving and departing MSP.

One hundred and sixty-four commenters (including 130 signed form letters from glider pilots who operate out of Benson Municipal Airport or Stanton Airfield) opposed the planned base altitude of 4,000 feet over Benson Municipal Airport and Stanton Airfield. The Benson Municipal Airport (located 17 miles to the north of I-MSP) is within the lateral limits of the current MSP Class B airspace area and the planned expansion of the 4,000-foot base altitude to 30 NM from I-MSP would require aircraft departing the Benson Municipal Airport to fly 13 miles farther to depart the lateral limits of the MSP Class B airspace area and may also interfere with glider operations at that airport. Glider operations may also be impacted at Stanton Airfield, which is located approximately 30 NM to the south of MSP on the edge of the planned MSP Class B airspace area. To address these concerns, the FAA has changed the planned modifications by raising the base altitude between 20 NM and 30 NM from I-MSP from 4,000 feet MSL to 7,000 feet MSL (with the exception of extensions to the east and west of MSP that must remain at 4,000 feet MSL to contain aircraft conducting simultaneous approaches. The planned modifications were also changed to include "cut-outs" 20 NM to the north and 25 NM to the south of I-MSP. These changes mitigate the impact on glider operations at the Benson Municipal Airport and Stanton Airfield, respectively.

Ad Hoc Committee

The Ad Hoc Committee was sponsored by Minnesota Department of Transportation, Office of Aeronautics and was comprised of representatives from the AOPA, EAA, Minnesota Soaring Clubs, International Aerobatics, Ultralight Association, Air National Guard, Life Flight, flight instructors, and skydivers. On May 14, 2002, the Ad Hoc Committee held the first of two meetings. During this meeting, representatives from the Minneapolis Airport Traffic Control Tower presented details of planned MSP Class B airspace area modifications, which reflected comments received as a result of informal airspace meetings. In general, the Ad Hoc Committee's comments on the planned modifications were favorable. However, several invited members of the Ad hoc Committee were not present and the committee decided that an additional meeting was necessary to ensure that input was obtained from all members/organizations who had agreed to participate on the Ad Hoc Committee.

On June 25, 2002, the Ad Hoc Committee held their second and final meeting. During this meeting, participants presented comments and recommendations regarding the planned modifications presented at the first Ad Hoc Committee meeting. The Ad Hoc Committee then reached a consensus and drafted a consolidated recommendation that was submitted to the FAA. The consolidated recommendation contained the following two suggestions and one comment pertaining to aerobatic waivers:

1. Reduce the proposed expansion of Area E around the Stanton Airfield from the I-MSP 30-NM arc to the I-MSP 25-NM arc and raise the proposed floor in this area from 6,000 feet MSL to 7,000 feet MSL. The FAA has adopted this recommendation.

2. Provide a cutout in Area D over Benson Municipal Airport, bounded by the Farmington (FGT) Very High Frequency Omnidirectional Range/Tactical Air Navigation (VORTAC) 006° radial, the FGT VORTAC 015° radial, and the Gopher (GEP) VORTAC 095° radial. The FAA did not adopt this recommendation because the area is within the existing Class B airspace area and the published missed approach holding pattern used for the majority of MSP instrument approach procedures utilizes the Whisk intersection, which is located within the area that the recommendation suggests eliminating. Altitudes utilized by aircraft holding at