

P-2012
IDENTIFY CONTROLLED AND SPECIAL USE AIRSPACES ON A SECTIONAL
CONDITIONS

You are a Mission Observer trainee and must identify controlled and special use airspaces on a sectional chart.

OBJECTIVES

Identify controlled and special use airspaces on a sectional chart and discuss operations in or near each.

TRAINING AND EVALUATION

Training Outline

1. As a Mission Observer trainee, being able to identify and discuss operations near controlled airports and special use airspaces is essential.
2. Controlled airports. The most stringent requirements normally are associated with flight in airspace immediately surrounding a major airport due to the high density of operations conducted there. Observers must be alert for required communication when it appears a search will be conducted within 40 miles of a major airport or within 5 miles of any airport having an operating control tower: these are color coded *blue* on sectional charts. Major airports in this context are generally near major metropolitan areas and appear at or near the center of concentric blue-, magenta-, or gray-colored circles. Also, crew resource management and the "sterile cockpit" environment are essential in or near these busy airports in order to "see and avoid" obstacles and other aircraft.
3. Special Use Airspace. Although not a class of airspace, the FAA has designated some airspace as "special use" airspace. The FAA has specifically created special use airspace for use by the military, although the FAA retains control. Active special use airspace can become a navigational obstacle to search aircraft and uncontrolled objects (e.g., missiles) within the airspace can present a serious threat to the safety of CAP aircraft and personnel. Special use airspace normally appears on sectional charts as irregularly shaped areas outlined by *either blue or magenta hatched lines*. It is also identified by either a name, such as Tyndall E MOA, or an alphanumeric identifier like R-4404A. Hours of use and vertical limits of special use airspace areas, as well as the FAA facility controlling each area, are printed in one of the margins of the sectional chart. If the CAP crew has any doubt about entering special use airspace, it should contact the appropriate air traffic control facility first to check the status of the area in question.

Prohibited Areas contain airspace within which the flight of aircraft is prohibited for national security or other reasons. An example is the airspace around the White House.

An "R" prefix to a five-letter identifier indicates a *Restricted Area*. The Army may be conducting artillery firing within this airspace, or military aircraft may be practicing actual air-to-surface bombing, gunnery, or munitions testing. Shells, bombs, and bullets, as well as the dirt and fragments they throw into the air on ground impact, present a severe hazard to any aircraft that might come in their path. The restricted area's boundaries are always printed in *blue*.

Within the boundaries of a *Military Operations Area (MOA)* the military may be conducting high-speed jet combat training or practicing air-to-ground weapons attack, without objects actually being released from the aircraft. MOA boundaries and their names are always printed in *magenta* on the sectional chart. Civilian aircraft operating under VFR are *not* prohibited from entering an active MOA, and may do so at any time without any coordination whatsoever (although this is considered foolish by many pilots). As stated earlier,

since the FAA retains control of the airspace, it is prudent to contact the controlling air traffic facility before continuing a search into any MOA. Military aircraft, often flying at very low altitudes and at high speeds, are usually not in radar or radio contact with the air traffic controller (nor can they see or hear you). A controller can only provide positive separation to civilian IFR aircraft from the MOA boundary, *not* from the military aircraft itself. This may force significant maneuvering off your intended course.

4. **Military Training Routes.** Although not classified by the FAA as special use airspace, military training routes (MTRs) are for military low-altitude high-speed training. MTRs are identified by one of two designations, depending upon the flight rules under which the military operates when working within that airspace. *Instrument Routes* (IR) and *Visual Routes* (VR) are identified on sectional aeronautical charts by medium-weight solid gray lines with an alphanumeric designation. 4-digit numbers identify MTRs flown at or below 1500 feet AGL; 3-digit numbers identify those flown above 1500 feet AGL.

Only route centerlines are printed on sectional charts, but each route includes a specified lateral distance to either side of the printed centerline and a specific altitude “block”. Route widths vary, but can be determined for any individual route by requesting Department of Defense *Flight Information Publication AP-1B* at the Flight Service Station.

The letters *IR* (e.g., IR-120) indicate that military aircraft operate in that route according to IFR clearances issued by air traffic control. Other non-military VFR aircraft may enter the lateral or vertical boundaries of an active IR route without prior coordination, while aircraft operating IFR are kept out by air traffic control. Just as in the case of a MOA, air traffic control may not have radar and radio contact with the military aircraft using the route. Therefore, it is necessary to provide separation between other IFR aircraft and the route airspace regardless of where the military aircraft may be located along the route. This may force either a route or altitude change. You can request the status of IR routes from the controlling air traffic facility.

The letters *VR* (e.g., VR-1102) indicate that the military operates under VFR when operating within the lateral and vertical limits of that airspace. The see-and-avoid concept applies to *all* civilian and military aircraft operating there, and all crew members must be vigilant in visual lookout when within or near a VR training route. Many military missions go to and from visual training routes' start and exit points on IFR clearances, and the prudent crew can inquire about the status of the route with air traffic control when operating through or near a VR training route.

You can determine *scheduled* military activity for restricted areas, MOAs, and military training routes by checking *Notices to Airmen* (NOTAMS) at the Flight Service Station. However, checking with the air traffic control facilities is preferable, since it will reveal *actual*, "real time" activity versus *scheduled* activity. When flying through any special use airspace or training route, crewmembers should be alert and cautious at all times, because incorrect or incomplete coordination between the military and the FAA is the rule rather than the exception.

Additional Information

More detailed information on this topic and examples are available in Chapter 8 of the MART.

Evaluation Preparation

Setup: Provide the student a sectional chart(s) containing controlled airports and all forms of special use airspaces.

Brief Student: You are an Observer trainee asked to identify (sectional) and discuss operations near controlled airports and special use airspaces.

Evaluation

Performance measures

Results

1. Identify (sectional) and discuss operations in and near, and identify on a sectional chart:
 - a. Controlled airport. P F
 - b. Prohibited airspace. P F
 - c. Restricted airspace. P F
 - d. Military Operating Area. P F
 - e. Military Training Routes. P F

Student must receive a pass on all performance measures to qualify in this task. If the individual fails any measure, show what was done wrong and how to do it correctly.