

APA Pilot Perspective

NEWS FROM THE ALLIED PILOTS ASSOCIATION ON ISSUES FACING OUR PILOTS AND THE TRAVELING PUBLIC

Vertical deck to shrink next year in U.S. airspace

Planes in U.S. airspace will be stacked in a tighter vertical deck beginning January 20, 2005, the target date for implementing Domestic Reduced Vertical Separation Minimum (DRVSM). Separation of aircraft flying between FL 290 and 410 in U.S. airspace will constrict by 1,000 feet rather than the current 2,000 feet. The final rule on DRVSM became effective November 26, 2003.

The rule will bring the U.S. one step closer to compliance with a plan that will align the world's airspace under the same standards of RVSM.

According to an ICAO study completed in 1988, RVSM is technically feasible and safe to implement. The FAA concludes that DRVSM will result in substantive benefits:

- \$5.3B will be saved in fuel costs from 2005 – 2016.

- Planes can attain more fuel-efficient altitudes and routes under DRVSM.
- ATC will have greater flexibility to route aircraft around storm systems.
- Less vectoring and FL changes will reduce controller workload.
- Enroute airspace capacity can grow.
- Controllers can mitigate conflict points.

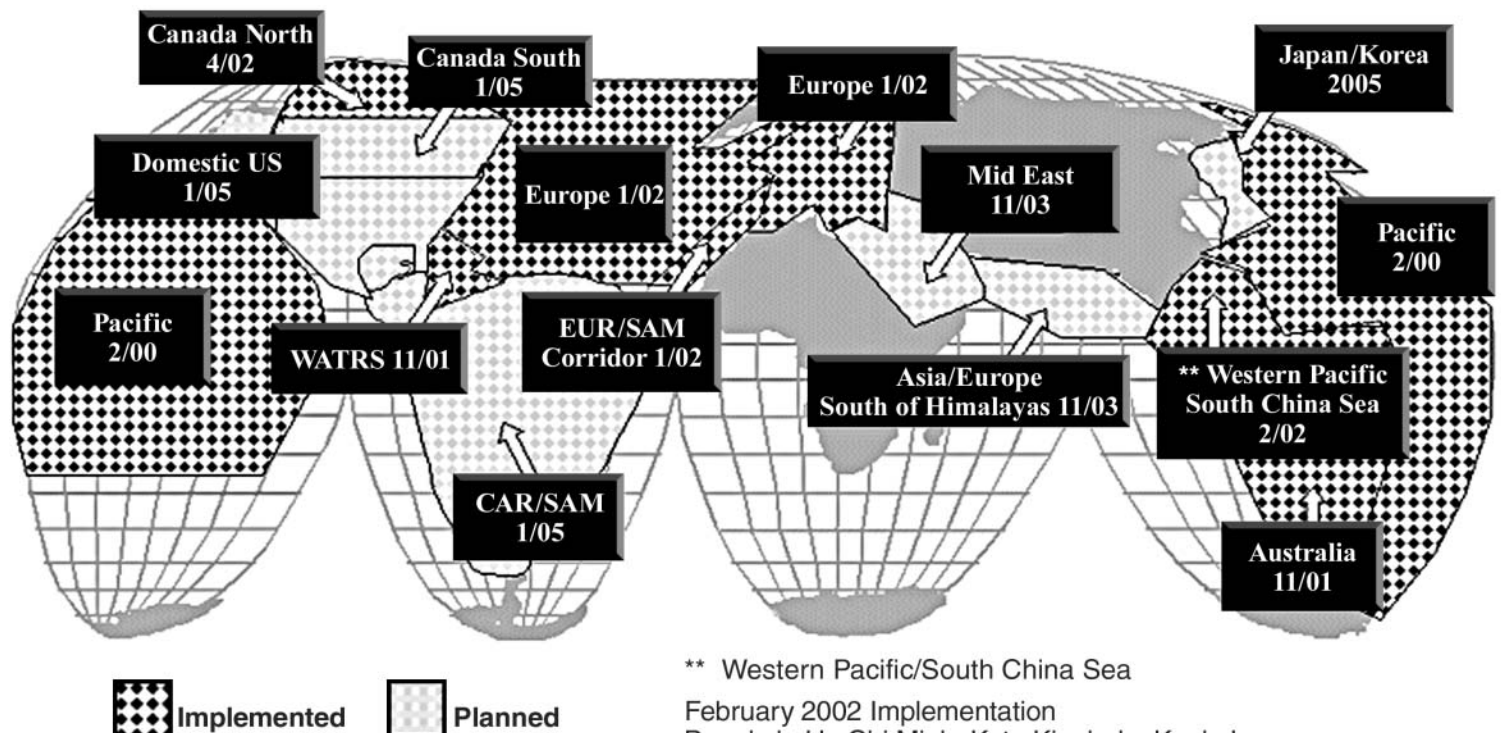
APA commented on the rule when it was proposed in May 2002, citing concerns about the absence of language applicable to safety factors and the FAA's lack of risk analysis to determine hazardous effects of DRVSM.

One safety factor that APA believes is critical to RVSM involves establishing TCAS as required equipment for all aircraft operating in the designated FLs — a requirement that is absent in the

rule. According to CA Mike Leone, Safety Committee Chairman, without requiring TCAS on all aircraft, RVSM is eroding safety margins that have proven to help mitigate near midair collisions.

"The FAA is lowering the safety bar by flying with just 1,000-foot vertical separation above 29,000 feet. The reason we had the 2,000-foot separation was for safety. TCAS is the only way to offset the lowered bar," Leone reiterates. Leone also says that anything short of making TCAS a no-go item is unacceptable. Under the final rule, a TCAS-equipped aircraft can be dispatched into RVSM airspace with an inoperative TCAS.

Leone also expresses doubt that the FAA has completed adequate risk assessments and is instead relying on the dynamics of RVSM as it has been implemented in *(continued on page 4)*



** Western Pacific/South China Sea

February 2002 Implementation
 Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh, Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Phnom Penh, Sanya, Singapore, Taipei

October 2002 Implementation
 Hanoi, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Ujung Pandang, Vientiane

Vertical deck *(continued from page 1)*

North Atlantic, Pacific, and European airspace. The FAA points to two studies already completed: work by the North Atlantic Systems Planning Group (NATSPG) and the ICAO review. The ICAO study was done prior to European implementation of RVSM. After Europe implemented the reduced altitude separation, a midair collision occurred. As a result of that accident, some authorities now dispute ICAO's analysis results. Nevertheless, the FAA has adopted the ICAO collision risk model.

APA, however, continues to ask the FAA for changes in the TCAS requirement and for a safety assessment based on traffic density patterns similar to that of the U.S.

Leone has briefed CA Mark Hettermann, AA Vice President – Flight, and Ms. Peggy Sterling, AA Vice President – Safety, Security & Environmental, on the issue. Leone would prefer that American Airlines lead the industry by ensuring that AA aircraft have operable TCAS in all non-radar environments. However, Leone encouraged AA to consider making an operable TCAS mandatory in all airspace environments. An aircraft with inoperable TCAS would fly at an altitude lower than FL300 in DRVSM airspace. Putting safety first and leading the industry on this matter is the right thing to do, according to Leone.

Pilots may access more information about DRVSM from the FAA Web site at: <http://www2.faa.gov/ats/ato/drvm/default.asp>. The Safety Committee will keep you informed of developments regarding DRVSM.



Allied Pilots Association
O'Connell Building
14600 Trinity Blvd., Suite 500
Fort Worth, TX 76155-2512

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ARLINGTON, TX
PERMIT NO. 269

Accident workshop readies safety investigators

By Linda Jacobson, STSA

The Allied Pilots Association hosted its first Accident Investigation Workshop on January 13, 2004, at APA headquarters. CA Guy Peers, Safety Deputy Chairman – Accident Investigation, facilitated the meeting which featured classroom training, Blood Borne Pathogen certification, and a hands-on exercise in collecting accident data. CA Mike Leone, Safety Committee Chairman, spoke at the one-day event, and APA Vice President CA Bob Ames also addressed attendees that afternoon.

The 28 attendees received instruction from five trainers who are experienced in aviation disasters. They spoke on various accident investigation topics.

CA Peers described the method in which the NTSB conducts major accident investigations. He also discussed various technical investigative groups and areas each group covers during an investigation.

FO Tim Miner, current 587 Technical Group member, outlined the importance of weather to an accident investigation.

FO Bob Brown, Safety Deputy Chairman –



FOQA, certified attendees in Blood Borne Pathogen training, as mandated by the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA).

Ray Duke, APA Safety, Training, Security & Aeromedical (STSA) Director, clarified the issue of pilots' legal representation and obligations during an accident investigation.

CA Peers and FO Bob Brown led the group through hands-on exercises in collecting accident data.

CA John VanDeventer, AA, spoke on functioning within an NTSB Operations Group.

Both current AIT members and new recruits attended. Although he is a seasoned safety

committee volunteer since 1999, CA Bill Mino (DFW) is new to accident investigation. During the investigation of the crash of AA Flight #1420, Mino helped coordinate communications at APA headquarters.

"I was on the periphery of 1420 but not onsite. This is the first time I have attended an Accident Investigation Workshop." At the training, Mino says he picked up specifics that he had not

realized before. He says he got a feel for what actually takes place in the field and was particularly impressed with the steps in data collection. "It was interesting to me to hear the speakers today relate what helped them to find the cause of an accident and, in hindsight, what they could have done better."

FO Howard French (ORD) is also new to accident investigation. Like Mino, French has served as a safety volunteer but has not been involved with aviation disasters. He echoed Mino's experience. "The seminar was extremely informative. I have the tools that will help me serve our pilots if the need arises."