

Date: August 2005
Contact: Rebecca Trexler
Phone: 202-267-3883

FACT SHEET
Security-Restricted Airspace

Flight-Restricted Zone (FRZ)

The Flight-Restricted Zone (FRZ) extends approximately 15 nautical miles (about 17 statute miles) around the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. The airport is located in Arlington County, Virginia, four miles from downtown Washington, D.C. The FRZ is not a perfect circle.

The only non-governmental flights allowed within the FRZ are scheduled commercial flights into and out of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. Pilots who have been vetted by the Transportation Security Administration are allowed into the three Maryland general aviation airports. Other commercial air carrier flights can be vectored into the FRZ by air traffic controllers. Some news and traffic-reporting aircraft are allowed in as close as seven miles.

The FRZ has been in effect since the terrorist attacks of September 11. It was initially 25 nautical miles (about 29 statute mile) and was subsequently reduced to 18 nautical miles (about 21 statute miles). It has been a radius of 15 nautical miles for the past three years.

Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ)

The Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) surrounds the FRZ, and extends in radius around the three major metropolitan airports: Reagan Washington National, Baltimore-Washington International, and Dulles International. The ADIZ extends approximately 20 nautical miles (about 23 statute miles) around Dulles and Baltimore-Washington, and 30 nautical miles (about 35 statute miles) around Washington National Airport. Reporters say the shape of the ADIZ reminds them of Mickey Mouse's head and ears.

The ADIZ was put into effect in February 2003.

There are a number of requirements for aircraft flying within the ADIZ:

- Flying within, into, or out of the ADIZ requires an advance clearance from the FAA's air traffic control.
- Aircraft flying within the ADIZ must have an altitude-encoding transponder that is operating.
- Each aircraft that is given clearance to fly within the ADIZ is assigned a four-digit number that identifies the aircraft to air traffic control by call sign or registration number, aircraft type, destination, etc.
- While flying within the ADIZ, the pilot must be in direct contact with air traffic control unless cleared to the local airport traffic advisory frequency.

Prohibited Area 56 (P-56)

P-56A & B are areas surrounding the White House and the vice president's residence.

The only aircraft that are allowed to fly within these prohibited areas are specially authorized flights that are in direct support of the U.S. Secret Service, the Office of the President, or one of several government agencies with missions that require air support within P-56. These prohibited areas have been in effect for about 50 years.

P-56A covers approximately the area west of the Lincoln Memorial (Rock Creek Park) to east of the Capitol (Stanton Square) and between Independence Ave. and K Street up to 18,000 feet.

P-56B covers a small circle of about 1 nautical mile (about 1.2 statute miles) surrounding the Naval Observatory on Massachusetts Ave. up to 18,000 feet.

Temporary Flight Restrictions

The FAA institutes temporary flight restrictions for hazards to aviation, such as forest fires smoke, volcano plumes, and air shows, as well as for security reasons. Most temporary flight restrictions (TFRs) are noted on the FAA home page, www.faa.gov, under "Graphic TFRs."

When the president or the vice president flies, their planes receive priority handling by air traffic control. However, Air Force One and Two receive standard en-route separation from other aircraft.

At the request of the U.S. Secret Service, the FAA can restrict airspace around locations where the president is visiting for TFRs of up to 30 nautical miles in radius and heights of 18,000 feet. Generally, all flights that have not received special security vetting by the Transportation Security Agency are prohibited within these TFRs.

Airspace Security Violations

As of May 12, 2005, there have been approximately 1,682 pilot deviations filed for violations of the restricted airspace in and around the National Capitol Region since the ADIZ was put in place February 13, 2003.

As of May 12, 2005, there have been 2,211 security-related airspace violations in the Washington, D.C., area. This includes violations of the FRZ, P56, P40 (Camp David), and other violations that occurred before the ADIZ was put into effect.

Pilots are required by FAA regulation to check in advance for any flight restrictions that may be in effect on or near their planned routes before they fly. The best way to do this is for pilots to call their Flight Service Stations before take off for briefings on the weather, flight restrictions, and anything else that may effect the area in which they plan to fly. The FAA also issues Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) to advise pilots of flight restrictions and other special circumstances (such as closed runways, restrictions due to volcanic plumes, etc). Both the NOTAMs and most of the graphic representations of all flight restricted-areas can be found on the FAA home page,

www.faa.gov, under "NOTAMs" and "Graphic TFRs." The agency has also performed extensive outreach in coordination with the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.

The FAA has the authority to take certificate (suspension or revocation of the pilots' certificate) or civil-penalty (monetary) actions against pilots who violate the Federal Aviation Regulations or Federal Aviation laws. Most of these security-related violations result in 30- to 90-day suspensions of the pilots' FAA certificates. Other agencies may pursue criminal actions if those are warranted.

Visual Warning System for the ADIZ

NORAD (the North American Aerospace Defense Command) on May 21, 2005, deployed a new warning signal for communicating with aircraft that have flown into the ADIZ or FRZ. The signal consists of highly focused red and green colored lights in an alternating red/ red/green signal pattern. This signal will be directed at specific aircraft suspected of making unauthorized entry into the ADIZ/FRZ and are on a heading or flight path that may be interpreted as a threat, or that operate contrary to the operating rules for the ADIZ/FRZ.

The beam will not injure the eyes of pilots, aircrews or passengers, regardless of altitude or distance from the source.

If pilots are in communication with air traffic control and this signal is directed at their aircraft, they are advised to immediately tell air traffic control that they are being illuminated by a visual-warning signal. If this signal is directed at a pilot who is not communicating with air traffic control, that pilot should turn to a heading away from the center of the FRZ/ADIZ as soon as possible and immediately contact air traffic control on an appropriate frequency, or if unsure of the frequency, contact ATC on VHF guard 121.5 or UHF guard 243.0.

Failure to follow these procedures may result in interception by military aircraft and/or the use of force. This applies to all aircraft operating within the ADIZ, including Department of Defense, law enforcement, and aeromedical operations.