

Section 6. Operational Policy/Procedures for Reduced Vertical Separation Minimum (RVSM) in the Domestic U.S., Alaska, Offshore Airspace and the San Juan FIR

4-6-1. Applicability and RVSM Mandate (Date/Time and Area)

a. Applicability. The policies, guidance and direction in this section apply to RVSM operations in the airspace over the lower 48 states, Alaska, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico High Offshore Airspace and airspace in the San Juan FIR where VHF or UHF voice direct controller-pilot communication (DCPC) is normally available. Policies, guidance and direction for RVSM operations in oceanic airspace where VHF or UHF voice DCPC is not available and the airspace of other countries are posted on the FAA “RVSM Documentation” web page described in Paragraph 4-6-3, Aircraft and Operator Approval Policy/Procedures, RVSM Monitoring and Databases for Aircraft and Operator Approval.

b. Mandate. At 0901 UTC on January 20, 2005, the FAA implemented RVSM between flight level (FL) 290-410 (inclusive) in the following airspace: the airspace of the lower 48 states of the United States, Alaska, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico High Offshore Airspace and the San Juan FIR. On the same time and date, RVSM was also introduced into the adjoining airspace of Canada and Mexico to provide a seamless environment for aircraft traversing those borders. In addition, RVSM was implemented on the same date in the Caribbean and South American regions.

c. RVSM Authorization. In accordance with 14 CFR Section 91.180, with only limited exceptions, prior to operating in RVSM airspace, operators and aircraft must have received RVSM authorization from the responsible civil aviation authority. (See Paragraph 4-6-10, Procedures for Accommodation of Non-RVSM Aircraft.) If the operator or aircraft or both have not been authorized for RVSM operations, the aircraft will be referred to as a “non-RVSM” aircraft. Paragraph 4-6-10 discusses ATC policies for accommodation of non-RVSM aircraft flown by the Department of Defense, Air Ambulance (MEDEVAC) operators, foreign State governments and aircraft flown for certification and development.

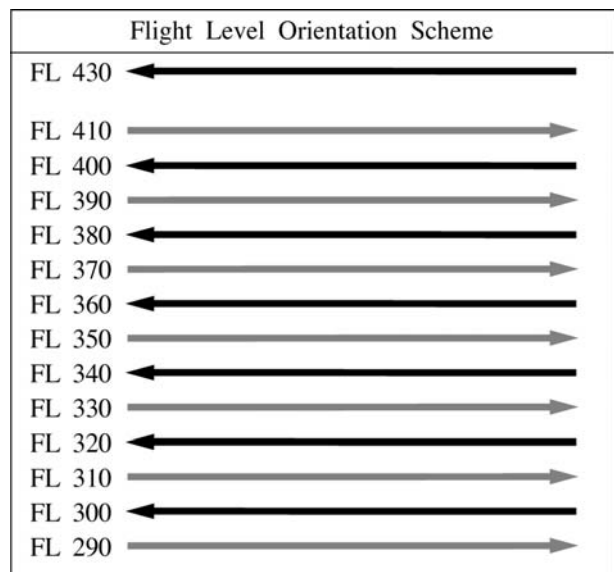
Paragraph 4-6-11, Non-RVSM Aircraft Requesting Climb to and Descent from Flight Levels Above RVSM Airspace Without Intermediate Level Off, contains policies for non-RVSM aircraft climbing and descending through RVSM airspace to/from flight levels above RVSM airspace.

d. Benefits. RVSM enhances ATC flexibility, mitigates conflict points, enhances sector throughput, reduces controller workload and enables crossing traffic. Operators gain fuel savings and operating efficiency benefits by flying at more fuel efficient flight levels and on more user preferred routings.

4-6-2. Flight Level Orientation Scheme

Altitude assignments for direction of flight follow a scheme of odd altitude assignment for magnetic courses 000-179 degrees and even altitudes for magnetic courses 180-359 degrees for flights up to and including FL 410, as indicated in FIG 4-6-1.

FIG 4-6-1
Flight Level Orientation Scheme



NOTE-
Odd Flight Levels: Magnetic Course 000-179 Degrees
Even Flight Levels: Magnetic Course 180-359 Degrees.