

10-1-3. Helicopter Approach Procedures to VFR Heliports

a. Helicopter approaches may be developed for heliports that do not meet the design standards for an IFR heliport. The majority of IFR approaches to VFR heliports are developed in support of helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) operators. These approaches can be developed from conventional NAVAIDs or a RNAV system (including GPS). They are developed either as a Special Approach (pilot training is required for special procedures due to their unique characteristics) or a public approach (no special training required). These instrument procedures are developed as either an approach designed to a specific landing site, or an approach designed to a point-in-space.

1. Approach to a specific landing site. The approach is aligned to a missed approach point from which a landing can be accomplished with a maximum course change of 30 degrees. The visual segment from the MAP to the landing site is evaluated for obstacle hazards. These procedures are annotated: “PROCEED VISUALLY FROM (NAMED MAP) OR CONDUCT THE SPECIFIED MISSED APPROACH.”

(a) This phrase requires the pilot to either acquire and maintain visual contact with the landing site at or prior to the MAP, or execute a missed approach. The visibility minimum is based on the distance from the MAP to the landing site, among other factors.

(b) The pilot is required to maintain the published minimum visibility throughout the visual segment.

(c) Similar to an approach to a runway, the missed approach segment protection is not provided between the MAP and the landing site, and obstacle or terrain avoidance from the MAP to the landing site is the responsibility of the pilot.

(d) Upon reaching the MAP defined on the approach procedure, or as soon as practicable after reaching the MAP, the pilot advises ATC whether proceeding visually and canceling IFR or complying with the missed approach instructions. See paragraph 5-1-15, Canceling IFR Flight Plan.

(e) At least one of the following visual references must be visible or identifiable before the pilot may proceed visually:

- (1) FATO or FATO lights.
- (2) TLOF or TLOF lights.
- (3) Heliport Instrument Lighting System (HILS).
- (4) Heliport Approach Lighting System (HALS) or lead-in lights.
- (5) Visual Glideslope Indicator (VGSI).
- (6) Windsock or windsock light(s). See note below.
- (7) Heliport beacon. See note below.
- (8) Other facilities or systems approved by the Flight Technologies and Procedures Division (AFS-400).

NOTE-

Windsock lights and heliport beacons should be located within 500 ft of the TLOF.

2. Approach to a Point-in-Space (PinS). At locations where the MAP is located more than 2 SM from the landing site, or the path from the MAP to the landing site is populated with obstructions which require avoidance actions or requires turns greater than 30 degrees, a PinS procedure may be developed. These approaches are annotated “PROCEED VFR FROM (NAMED MAP) OR CONDUCT THE SPECIFIED MISSED APPROACH.”

(a) These procedures require the pilot, at or prior to the MAP, to determine if the published minimum visibility, or the weather minimums required by the operating rule, or operations specifications (whichever is higher) is available to safely transition from IFR to VFR flight. If not, the pilot must execute a missed approach. For Part 135 operations, pilots may not begin the instrument approach unless the latest weather report indicates that the weather conditions are at or above the authorized IFR minimums or the VFR weather minimums (as required by the class of airspace, operating rule and/or Operations Specifications) whichever is higher.

(b) Visual contact with the landing site is not required; however, the pilot must maintain the appropriate VFR weather minimums throughout the visual segment. The visibility is limited to no lower