

Title 14—Aeronautics and Space
CHAPTER I—FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

[Docket No. 14237; Special Federal Aviation Regulation No. 29-1]

LIMITED IFR OPERATIONS OF ROTORCRAFT
FAA Study

The purpose of this Special Federal Aviation Regulation is to extend the expiration date of Special Federal Aviation Regulation No. 29 (SFAR No. 29) to provide for further time for the collection of operational data in connection with an FAA study of limited rotorcraft operations in IFR conditions. SFAR No. 29 was issued for a period of one year to provide for the issue by the Administrator of approvals for limited operations under instrument flight rules (IFR) of certain transport category rotorcraft that are limited by their type certificates to operations under visual flight rules (VFR).

Under the current Federal Aviation Regulations a transport category rotorcraft is certificated for VFR operation only unless it has been shown that the rotorcraft fully complies with all of the airworthiness requirements for IFR operations. The FAA believes that certain IFR operations can safely be conducted over low density routes, in off-airways operations, and in uncontrolled airspace with transport category rotorcraft that do not meet all of the present flight characteristics requirements. As stated in the preamble to SFAR No. 29, the FAA is conducting a study to determine whether a "limited" IFR category should be established for these rotorcraft, including flight characteristics and equipment requirements, operating procedures and limitations, flight crew requirements, and training requirements.

Before the issuance of SFAR No. 29 the FAA had already collected data from an operator of specially equipped Bell Model 212 helicopters that are flown by flight crews trained in operating those rotorcraft in IFR conditions in the Gulf of Mexico. Those operations were conducted under the authority of an exemption from the Federal Aviation Regulations. Based on information and data collected during those operations, the FAA decided the study should be expanded to include operations in other geographic areas. In this connection, the FAA determined that it would be in the public interest and would not compromise safety to allow any operator of transport category rotorcraft to participate in the study, if its aircraft equipment, procedures, and area of operation ensure a level of safety under limited IFR operations equivalent to that pro-

vided by the present requirements of Part 29.

Although the FAA expected a number of helicopter operators to participate in the study, during the first six months after the effective date of SFAR No. 29, no additional operators expressed an interest in participating in the study. A number of operators have indicated to the FAA a belief that the one-year effective period of SFAR No. 29 would not enable them to complete the actions necessary for limited helicopter IFR authorization, or to defray the necessary expenses through additional revenues.

Moreover, a number of navigational systems are under development and not yet fully operational that the FAA anticipates would be used in rotorcraft engaged in limited IFR operations. Information on operations using this equipment will be important to the FAA's decision on whether to initiate rulemaking.

In view of the foregoing, the FAA has determined that it is necessary to extend its study for an additional three year period to provide sufficient data upon which to base a decision whether to initiate rulemaking action to amend the Federal Aviation Regulations to permit limited IFR operations with transport category rotorcraft that do not meet all of the present airworthiness requirements of Part 29 for unlimited operation under IFR. Accordingly, this SFAR is being issued for a period of three years.

It should be noted that this SFAR, as did SFAR No. 29, provides as part of the study that the FAA may approve the carriage in IFR operations of less than the 45 minutes of additional fuel reserve required by § 91.23(c). In pertinent part, § 91.23 requires that, in IFR conditions, the rotorcraft must have enough fuel to complete the contemplated flight, to fly from the airport of intended landing to the alternate airport, and fly thereafter for 45 minutes at normal cruising speed. This Special Federal Aviation Regulation permits the approval of less than 45 minutes, but not less than 30 minutes, of additional fuel reserve. A factor considered in granting this approval will be the environment in which the rotorcraft is to be operated.

In view of the fact that this amendment temporarily relieves a restriction in connection with operations conducted as part of an FAA study, and since there is an immediate need for the data to be derived from the study, I find that notice and public procedure thereon are impractical and unnecessary, and good cause exists for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.

(Sections 313(a), 601(a), and 603 of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958; 49 U.S.C. 1354

(a), 1421(a), and 1423. Section 6(c) of the Department of Transportation Act; 49 U.S.C. 1655(c).)

In consideration of the foregoing, the following Special Federal Aviation Regulations is adopted, effective December 31, 1975.

SPECIAL FEDERAL AVIATION
SFAR 29-1

1. Contrary provisions of Parts 21 and 29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations notwithstanding, an operator of a rotorcraft that is not otherwise certificated for IFR operations may conduct an approved limited IFR operation in the rotorcraft when—

(a) FAA approval for the operation has been issued under paragraph 2 of this SFAR;

(b) The operator complies with all conditions and limitations established by this SFAR and the approval; and

(c) A copy of the approval and this SFAR are set forth as a supplement to the rotorcraft flight manual.

2. FAA approval for the operation of a rotorcraft in limited IFR operations may be issued when the following conditions are met:

(a) The operation is approved as part of the FAA study of limited rotorcraft IFR operations.

(b) Specific FAA approval has been obtained for the following:

(i) The rotorcraft (make, model, and serial number).

(ii) The flight crew.

(iii) The routes over which the rotorcraft is to be flown or its area of operation.

(iv) The procedures to be followed in the operation of the rotorcraft under IFR and the equipment that must be operable during such operations.

(c) The conditions and limitations necessary for the safe operation of the rotorcraft in limited IFR operations have been established, approved, and incorporated in the operating limitations section of the Rotorcraft Flight Manual.

3. An approval issued under paragraph 2 of this Special Federal Aviation Regulation and the change to the Rotorcraft Flight Manual specified in paragraph 2(c) of this Special Federal Aviation Regulation constitute a supplemental type certificate for each rotorcraft approved under paragraph 2 of this SFAR. Each approval issued under this SFAR terminates on December 31, 1978, unless sooner superseded, rescinded, or otherwise terminated by the Administrator.

4. Notwithstanding § 91.23(c) of the Federal Aviation Regulations, a person may operate a rotorcraft in a limited IFR operation approved under paragraph 2(a) of this Special Federal Aviation Regulation with enough fuel to fly, after reaching the alternate airport, for not less than 30 minutes, when that period of time has been approved.

This Special Federal Aviation Regulation terminates on December 31, 1978, unless sooner superseded or rescinded.

Issued in Washington, D.C., on December 30, 1975.

JOHN L. MCLUCAS,
Administrator.

(As published in the Federal Register /41 F.R. 1060/ on January 6, 1976)

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