

## §91.180

(a) *In controlled airspace.* Each person operating an aircraft under IFR in level cruising flight in controlled airspace shall maintain the altitude or flight level assigned that aircraft by ATC. However, if the ATC clearance assigns “VFR conditions on-top,” that person shall maintain an altitude or flight level as prescribed by §91.159.

(b) *In uncontrolled airspace.* Except while in a holding pattern of 2 minutes or less or while turning, each person operating an aircraft under IFR in level cruising flight in uncontrolled airspace shall maintain an appropriate altitude as follows:

(1) When operating below 18,000 feet MSL and—

(i) On a magnetic course of zero degrees through 179 degrees, any odd thousand foot MSL altitude (such as 3,000, 5,000, or 7,000); or

(ii) On a magnetic course of 180 degrees through 359 degrees, any even thousand foot MSL altitude (such as 2,000, 4,000, or 6,000).

(2) When operating at or above 18,000 feet MSL but below flight level 290, and—

(i) On a magnetic course of zero degrees through 179 degrees, any odd flight level (such as 190, 210, or 230); or

(ii) On a magnetic course of 180 degrees through 359 degrees, any even flight level (such as 180, 200, or 220).

(3) When operating at flight level 290 and above in non-RVSM airspace, and—

(i) On a magnetic course of zero degrees through 179 degrees, any flight level, at 4,000-foot intervals, beginning at and including flight level 290 (such as flight level 290, 330, or 370); or

(ii) On a magnetic course of 180 degrees through 359 degrees, any flight level, at 4,000-foot intervals, beginning at and including flight level 310 (such as flight level 310, 350, or 390).

(4) When operating at flight level 290 and above in airspace designated as Reduced Vertical Separation Minimum (RVSM) airspace and—

(i) On a magnetic course of zero degrees through 179 degrees, any odd flight level, at 2,000-foot intervals beginning at and including flight level 290 (such as flight level 290, 310, 330, 350, 370, 390, 410); or

(ii) On a magnetic course of 180 degrees through 359 degrees, any even

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flight level, at 2000-foot intervals beginning at and including flight level 300 (such as 300, 320, 340, 360, 380, 400).

[Doc. No. 18334, 54 FR 34294, Aug. 18, 1989, as amended by Amdt. 91–276, 68 FR 61321, Oct. 27, 2003; 68 FR 70133, Dec. 17, 2003; Amdt. 91–296, 72 FR 31679, June 7, 2007]

### §91.180 Operations within airspace designated as Reduced Vertical Separation Minimum airspace.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, no person may operate a civil aircraft in airspace designated as Reduced Vertical Separation Minimum (RVSM) airspace unless:

(1) The operator and the operator’s aircraft comply with the minimum standards of appendix G of this part; and

(2) The operator is authorized by the Administrator or the country of registry to conduct such operations.

(b) The Administrator may authorize a deviation from the requirements of this section.

[Amdt. 91–276, 68 FR 70133, Dec. 17, 2003]

### §91.181 Course to be flown.

Unless otherwise authorized by ATC, no person may operate an aircraft within controlled airspace under IFR except as follows:

(a) On an ATS route, along the centerline of that airway.

(b) On any other route, along the direct course between the navigational aids or fixes defining that route. However, this section does not prohibit maneuvering the aircraft to pass well clear of other air traffic or the maneuvering of the aircraft in VFR conditions to clear the intended flight path both before and during climb or descent.

[Doc. No. 18334, 54 FR 34294, Aug. 18, 1989, as amended by Amdt. 91–296, 72 FR 31679, June 7, 2007]

### §91.183 IFR communications.

Unless otherwise authorized by ATC, the pilot in command of each aircraft operated under IFR in controlled airspace must ensure that a continuous watch is maintained on the appropriate frequency and must report the following as soon as possible—

(a) The time and altitude of passing each designated reporting point, or the reporting points specified by ATC, except that while the aircraft is under radar control, only the passing of those reporting points specifically requested by ATC need be reported;

(b) Any unforecast weather conditions encountered; and

(c) Any other information relating to the safety of flight.

[Doc. No. 18334, 54 FR 34294, Aug. 18, 1989, as amended by Amdt. 91-296, 72 FR 31679, June 7, 2007]

**§ 91.185 IFR operations: Two-way radio communications failure.**

(a) *General.* Unless otherwise authorized by ATC, each pilot who has two-way radio communications failure when operating under IFR shall comply with the rules of this section.

(b) *VFR conditions.* If the failure occurs in VFR conditions, or if VFR conditions are encountered after the failure, each pilot shall continue the flight under VFR and land as soon as practicable.

(c) *IFR conditions.* If the failure occurs in IFR conditions, or if paragraph (b) of this section cannot be complied with, each pilot shall continue the flight according to the following:

(1) *Route.* (i) By the route assigned in the last ATC clearance received;

(ii) If being radar vectored, by the direct route from the point of radio failure to the fix, route, or airway specified in the vector clearance;

(iii) In the absence of an assigned route, by the route that ATC has advised may be expected in a further clearance; or

(iv) In the absence of an assigned route or a route that ATC has advised may be expected in a further clearance, by the route filed in the flight plan.

(2) *Altitude.* At the highest of the following altitudes or flight levels for the route segment being flown:

(i) The altitude or flight level assigned in the last ATC clearance received;

(ii) The minimum altitude (converted, if appropriate, to minimum flight level as prescribed in § 91.121(c)) for IFR operations; or

(iii) The altitude or flight level ATC has advised may be expected in a further clearance.

(3) *Leave clearance limit.* (i) When the clearance limit is a fix from which an approach begins, commence descent or descent and approach as close as possible to the expect-further-clearance time if one has been received, or if one has not been received, as close as possible to the estimated time of arrival as calculated from the filed or amended (with ATC) estimated time en route.

(ii) If the clearance limit is not a fix from which an approach begins, leave the clearance limit at the expect-further-clearance time if one has been received, or if none has been received, upon arrival over the clearance limit, and proceed to a fix from which an approach begins and commence descent or descent and approach as close as possible to the estimated time of arrival as calculated from the filed or amended (with ATC) estimated time en route.

[Doc. No. 18334, 54 FR 34294, Aug. 18, 1989; Amdt. 91-211, 54 FR 41211, Oct. 5, 1989]

**§ 91.187 Operation under IFR in controlled airspace: Malfunction reports.**

(a) The pilot in command of each aircraft operated in controlled airspace under IFR shall report as soon as practical to ATC any malfunctions of navigational, approach, or communication equipment occurring in flight.

(b) In each report required by paragraph (a) of this section, the pilot in command shall include the—

(1) Aircraft identification;

(2) Equipment affected;

(3) Degree to which the capability of the pilot to operate under IFR in the ATC system is impaired; and

(4) Nature and extent of assistance desired from ATC.

**§ 91.189 Category II and III operations: General operating rules.**

(a) No person may operate a civil aircraft in a Category II or III operation unless—

(1) The flight crew of the aircraft consists of a pilot in command and a second in command who hold the appropriate authorizations and ratings prescribed in § 61.3 of this chapter;