

4-6-4. Flight Planning into RVSM Airspace

a. Operators that do not file the correct aircraft equipment suffix on the FAA or ICAO Flight Plan may be denied clearance into RVSM airspace. Policies for the FAA Flight Plan are detailed in subparagraph c below. Policies for the ICAO Flight Plan are detailed in subparagraph d.

b. The operator will annotate the equipment block of the FAA or ICAO Flight Plan with an aircraft equipment suffix indicating RVSM capability only after determining that both the operator is authorized and its aircraft are RVSM-compliant.

1. An operator may operate in RVSM airspace under the provisions of Part 91, Appendix G, Section 9, without specific authorization and should file “/w” in accordance with paragraph d.

2. An operator must get an OpSpec/MSpec/LOA when intending to operate RVSM outside U.S. airspace. Once issued, that operator can file “/w” in accordance with paragraph d.

3. An operator should not file “/w” when intending to operate in RVSM airspace outside of the U.S., if they do not hold a valid OpSpec/MSpec/LOA.

c. General Policies for FAA Flight Plan Equipment Suffix. Appendix 4, TBL 4-2, allows operators to indicate that the aircraft has both RVSM and Advanced Area Navigation (RNAV) capabilities or has only RVSM capability.

1. The operator will annotate the equipment block of the FAA Flight Plan with the appropriate aircraft equipment suffix from Appendix 4, TBL 4-2 and/or TBL 4-3.

2. Operators can only file one equipment suffix in block 3 of the FAA Flight Plan. Only this equipment suffix is displayed directly to the controller.

3. Aircraft with RNAV Capability. For flight in RVSM airspace, aircraft with RNAV capability, but not Advanced RNAV capability, will file “/W”. Filing “/W” will not preclude such aircraft from filing and flying direct routes in en route airspace.

d. Policy for ICAO Flight Plan Equipment Suffixes.

1. Operators/aircraft that are RVSM-compliant and that file ICAO flight plans will file “/W” in block 10 (Equipment) to indicate RVSM authorization and will also file the appropriate ICAO Flight Plan suffixes to indicate navigation and communication capabilities.

2. Operators/aircraft that file ICAO flight plans that include flight in Domestic U.S. RVSM airspace must file “/W” in block 10 to indicate RVSM authorization.

e. Importance of Flight Plan Equipment Suffixes. Military users, and civilians who file stereo route flight plans, must file the appropriate equipment suffix in the equipment block of the FAA Form 7233-1, Flight Plan, or DD Form 175, Military Flight Plan, or FAA Form 7233-4, International Flight Plan, or DD Form 1801, DoD International Flight Plan. All other users must file the appropriate equipment suffix in the equipment block of FAA Form 7233-4, International Flight Plan. The equipment suffix informs ATC:

1. Whether or not the operator and aircraft are authorized to fly in RVSM airspace.

2. The navigation and/or transponder capability of the aircraft (e.g., advanced RNAV, transponder with Mode C).

f. Significant ATC uses of the flight plan equipment suffix information are:

1. To issue or deny clearance into RVSM airspace.

2. To apply a 2,000 foot vertical separation minimum in RVSM airspace to aircraft that are not authorized for RVSM, but are in one of the limited categories that the FAA has agreed to accommodate. (See paragraphs 4-6-10, Procedures for Accommodation of Non-RVSM Aircraft, and 4-6-11, Non-RVSM Aircraft Requesting Climb to and Descent from Flight Levels Above RVSM Airspace Without Intermediate Level Off, for policy on limited operation of unapproved aircraft in RVSM airspace).