

Section 4. Arrival Procedures

5-4-1. Standard Terminal Arrival (STAR) Procedures

a. A STAR is an ATC coded IFR arrival route established for application to arriving IFR aircraft destined for certain airports. STARs simplify clearance delivery procedures, and also facilitate transition between en route and instrument approach procedures.

1. STAR procedures may have mandatory speeds and/or crossing altitudes published. Other STARs may have planning information depicted to inform pilots what clearances or restrictions to “expect.” “Expect” altitudes/speeds are not considered STAR procedures crossing restrictions unless verbally issued by ATC. Published speed restrictions are independent of altitude restrictions and are mandatory unless modified by ATC. Pilots should plan to cross waypoints with a published speed restriction, at the published speed, and should not exceed this speed past the associated waypoint unless authorized by ATC or a published note to do so.

NOTE-

The “expect” altitudes/speeds are published so that pilots may have the information for planning purposes. These altitudes/speeds must not be used in the event of lost communications unless ATC has specifically advised the pilot to expect these altitudes/speeds as part of a further clearance.

REFERENCE-

14 CFR Section 91.185(c)(2)(iii).

2. Pilots navigating on, or navigating a published route inbound to, a STAR procedure must maintain last assigned altitude until receiving authorization to descend so as to comply with all published/issued restrictions. This authorization may contain the phraseology “DESCEND VIA.” If vectored or cleared to deviate off of a STAR, pilots must consider the STAR canceled, unless the controller adds “expect to resume STAR;” pilots should then be prepared to rejoin the STAR at a subsequent fix or procedure leg. If a descent clearance has been received that included a crossing restriction, pilots should expect the controller to issue an altitude to maintain.

(a) Clearance to “descend via” authorizes pilots to:

(1) Descend at pilot’s discretion to meet published restrictions and laterally navigate on a STAR.

(2) When cleared to a waypoint depicted on a STAR, to descend from a previously assigned altitude at pilot’s discretion to the altitude depicted at that waypoint.

(3) Once established on the depicted arrival, to descend and to meet all published or assigned altitude and/or speed restrictions.

NOTE-

1. When otherwise cleared along a route or procedure that contains published speed restrictions, the pilot must comply with those speed restrictions independent of any descend via clearance.

2. ATC anticipates pilots will begin adjusting speed the minimum distance necessary prior to a published speed restriction so as to cross the waypoint/fix at the published speed. Once at the published speed, ATC expects pilots will maintain the published speed until additional adjustment is required to comply with further published or ATC assigned speed restrictions or as required to ensure compliance with 14 CFR Section 91.117.

3. The “descend via” is used in conjunction with STARs to reduce phraseology by not requiring the controller to restate the altitude at the next waypoint/fix to which the pilot has been cleared.

4. Air traffic will assign an altitude to cross the waypoint/fix, if no altitude is depicted at the waypoint/fix, for aircraft on a direct routing to a STAR. Air traffic must ensure obstacle clearance when issuing a “descend via” instruction to the pilot.

5. Minimum en route altitudes (MEA) are not considered restrictions; however, pilots must remain above all MEAs, unless receiving an ATC instruction to descend below the MEA.

EXAMPLE-

1. **Lateral/routing clearance only.**

“Cleared Tyler One arrival.”

NOTE-

In Example 1, pilots are cleared to fly the lateral path of the procedure. Compliance with any published speed restrictions is required. No descent is authorized.

2. **Routing with assigned altitude.**

“Cleared Tyler One arrival, descend and maintain flight level two four zero.”

“Cleared Tyler One arrival, descend at pilot’s discretion, maintain flight level two four zero.”