

5-6-17. Visual Warning System (VWS)

The VWS signal consists of highly-focused red and green colored laser lights designed to illuminate in an alternating red and green signal pattern. These lasers may be directed at specific aircraft suspected of making unauthorized entry into the Washington, DC Special Flight Rules Area (DC SFRA) proceeding on a heading or flight path that may be interpreted as a threat or that operate contrary to the operating rules for the DC SFRA. The beam is neither hazardous to the eyes of pilots/aircrew or passengers, regardless of altitude or distance from the source nor will the beam affect aircraft systems.

a. If you are communicating with ATC, and this signal is directed at your aircraft, you are required to contact ATC and advise that you are being illuminated by a visual warning system.

b. If this signal is directed at you, and you are not communicating with ATC, you are advised to turn to the most direct heading away from the center of the DC SFRA as soon as possible. Immediately contact

ATC on an appropriate frequency, VHF Guard 121.5 or UHF Guard 243.0, and provide your aircraft identification, position, and nature of the flight. Failure to follow these procedures may result in interception by military aircraft. Further noncompliance with interceptor aircraft or ATC may result in the use of force.

c. Pilots planning to operate aircraft in or near the DC SFRA are to familiarize themselves with aircraft intercept procedures. This information applies to all aircraft operating within the DC SFRA including DOD, Law Enforcement, and aircraft engaged in aeromedical operations and does not change procedures established for reporting unauthorized laser illumination as published in FAA Advisory Circulars and Notices.

REFERENCE-
CFR 91.161

d. More details including a video demonstration of the VWS are available from the following FAA website: www.faa.gov/VisualWarningSystem/VisualWarning.htm.