

## §91.115

another which is on final approach to land or to overtake that aircraft.

[Doc. No. 18334, 54 FR 34294, Aug. 18, 1989, as amended by Amdt. 91-282, 69 FR 44880, July 27, 2004]

### §91.115 Right-of-way rules: Water operations.

(a) *General.* Each person operating an aircraft on the water shall, insofar as possible, keep clear of all vessels and avoid impeding their navigation, and shall give way to any vessel or other aircraft that is given the right-of-way by any rule of this section.

(b) *Crossing.* When aircraft, or an aircraft and a vessel, are on crossing courses, the aircraft or vessel to the other's right has the right-of-way.

(c) *Approaching head-on.* When aircraft, or an aircraft and a vessel, are approaching head-on, or nearly so, each shall alter its course to the right to keep well clear.

(d) *Overtaking.* Each aircraft or vessel that is being overtaken has the right-of-way, and the one overtaking shall alter course to keep well clear.

(e) *Special circumstances.* When aircraft, or an aircraft and a vessel, approach so as to involve risk of collision, each aircraft or vessel shall proceed with careful regard to existing circumstances, including the limitations of the respective craft.

### §91.117 Aircraft speed.

(a) Unless otherwise authorized by the Administrator, no person may operate an aircraft below 10,000 feet MSL at an indicated airspeed of more than 250 knots (288 m.p.h.).

(b) Unless otherwise authorized or required by ATC, no person may operate an aircraft at or below 2,500 feet above the surface within 4 nautical miles of the primary airport of a Class C or Class D airspace area at an indicated airspeed of more than 200 knots (230 mph.). This paragraph (b) does not apply to any operations within a Class B airspace area. Such operations shall comply with paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) No person may operate an aircraft in the airspace underlying a Class B airspace area designated for an airport or in a VFR corridor designated through such a Class B airspace area,

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at an indicated airspeed of more than 200 knots (230 mph).

(d) If the minimum safe airspeed for any particular operation is greater than the maximum speed prescribed in this section, the aircraft may be operated at that minimum speed.

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### §91.119 Minimum safe altitudes: General.

Except when necessary for takeoff or landing, no person may operate an aircraft below the following altitudes:

(a) *Anywhere.* An altitude allowing, if a power unit fails, an emergency landing without undue hazard to persons or property on the surface.

(b) *Over congested areas.* Over any congested area of a city, town, or settlement, or over any open air assembly of persons, an altitude of 1,000 feet above the highest obstacle within a horizontal radius of 2,000 feet of the aircraft.

(c) *Over other than congested areas.* An altitude of 500 feet above the surface, except over open water or sparsely populated areas. In those cases, the aircraft may not be operated closer than 500 feet to any person, vessel, vehicle, or structure.

(d) *Helicopters, powered parachutes, and weight-shift-control aircraft.* If the operation is conducted without hazard to persons or property on the surface—

(1) A helicopter may be operated at less than the minimums prescribed in paragraph (b) or (c) of this section, provided each person operating the helicopter complies with any routes or altitudes specifically prescribed for helicopters by the FAA; and

(2) A powered parachute or weight-shift-control aircraft may be operated at less than the minimums prescribed in paragraph (c) of this section.

[Doc. No. 18334, 54 FR 34294, Aug. 18, 1989, as amended by Amdt. 91-311, 75 FR 5223, Feb. 1, 2010]

### §91.121 Altimeter settings.

(a) Each person operating an aircraft shall maintain the cruising altitude or flight level of that aircraft, as the case

may be, by reference to an altimeter that is set, when operating—

(1) Below 18,000 feet MSL, to—

(i) The current reported altimeter setting of a station along the route and within 100 nautical miles of the aircraft;

(ii) If there is no station within the area prescribed in paragraph (a)(1)(i) of this section, the current reported altimeter setting of an appropriate available station; or

(iii) In the case of an aircraft not equipped with a radio, the elevation of the departure airport or an appropriate altimeter setting available before departure; or

(2) At or above 18,000 feet MSL, to 29.92" Hg.

(b) The lowest usable flight level is determined by the atmospheric pressure in the area of operation as shown in the following table:

Current altimeter setting	Lowest usable flight level
29.92 (or higher) .....	180
29.91 through 29.42 .....	185
29.41 through 28.92 .....	190
28.91 through 28.42 .....	195
28.41 through 27.92 .....	200
27.91 through 27.42 .....	205
27.41 through 26.92 .....	210

(c) To convert minimum altitude prescribed under §§91.119 and 91.177 to the minimum flight level, the pilot shall take the flight level equivalent of the minimum altitude in feet and add the appropriate number of feet specified below, according to the current reported altimeter setting:

Current altimeter setting	Adjustment factor
29.92 (or higher) .....	None
29.91 through 29.42 .....	500
29.41 through 28.92 .....	1,000
28.91 through 28.42 .....	1,500
28.41 through 27.92 .....	2,000
27.91 through 27.42 .....	2,500
27.41 through 26.92 .....	3,000

**§91.123 Compliance with ATC clearances and instructions.**

(a) When an ATC clearance has been obtained, no pilot in command may deviate from that clearance unless an amended clearance is obtained, an emergency exists, or the deviation is in

response to a traffic alert and collision avoidance system resolution advisory. However, except in Class A airspace, a pilot may cancel an IFR flight plan if the operation is being conducted in VFR weather conditions. When a pilot is uncertain of an ATC clearance, that pilot shall immediately request clarification from ATC.

(b) Except in an emergency, no person may operate an aircraft contrary to an ATC instruction in an area in which air traffic control is exercised.

(c) Each pilot in command who, in an emergency, or in response to a traffic alert and collision avoidance system resolution advisory, deviates from an ATC clearance or instruction shall notify ATC of that deviation as soon as possible.

(d) Each pilot in command who (though not deviating from a rule of this subpart) is given priority by ATC in an emergency, shall submit a detailed report of that emergency within 48 hours to the manager of that ATC facility, if requested by ATC.

(e) Unless otherwise authorized by ATC, no person operating an aircraft may operate that aircraft according to any clearance or instruction that has been issued to the pilot of another aircraft for radar air traffic control purposes.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2120-0005)

[Doc. No. 18834, 54 FR 34294, Aug. 18, 1989, as amended by Amdt. 91-227, 56 FR 65658, Dec. 17, 1991; Amdt. 91-244, 60 FR 50679, Sept. 29, 1995]

**§ 91.125 ATC light signals.**

ATC light signals have the meaning shown in the following table:

Color and type of signal	Meaning with respect to aircraft on the surface	Meaning with respect to aircraft in flight
Steady green .....	Cleared for takeoff	Cleared to land.
Flashing green .....	Cleared to taxi .....	Return for landing (to be followed by steady green at proper time).
Steady red .....	Stop .....	Give way to other aircraft and continue circling.
Flashing red .....	Taxi clear of runway in use.	Airport unsafe—do not land.
Flashing white .....	Return to starting point on airport.	Not applicable.
Alternating red and green.	Exercise extreme caution.	Exercise extreme caution.