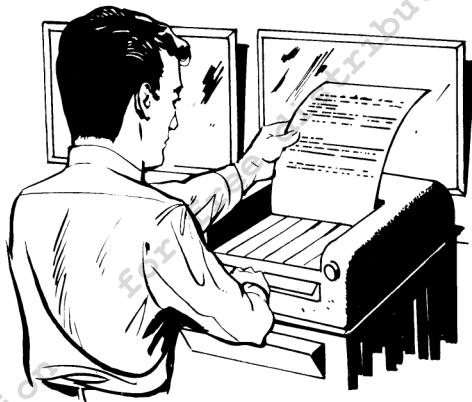


DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Aviation Administration
VFR PILOT EXAM-O-GRAM® NO. 56

SKY COVER SYMBOLS IN WEATHER REPORTS AND FORECASTS



This Exam-O-Gram is intended to bring to the attention of pilots certain changes in the format of Weather Reports and Forecasts made effective by the National Weather Service on August 1, 1975. Until all FAA written tests and study materials as well as commercial publications dealing with weather reports and forecasts can be updated to reflect these changes, it is imperative that certificated and student pilots understand the following changes:

Federal Aviation Regulations require that each pilot in command shall, before beginning a flight, familiarize himself with all available information concerning that flight. For a flight not in the vicinity of an airport, this information must include weather reports and forecasts. Such weather information transmitted through a worldwide teletype communications system and available at all Flight Service Stations and Weather Service Offices, has for many years utilized symbols to indicate clear conditions or scattered, broken, and overcast clouds.

Because of limitations imposed by the automatic computer system now used in processing and transmitting weather information, it is necessary to utilize word contractions in lieu of the traditional symbols.

WHAT ARE THE CHANGES? Effective August 1, 1975, sky cover symbols will be replaced by contractions on all teletype communications circuits. Sky cover symbols \odot (scattered), \oplus (broken), and \oplus (overcast) will be replaced by the contractions SCT, BKN, and OVC, respectively. A \circ (clear sky) will be indicated by the contraction CLR. A minus sign (-) preceding SCT, BKN, and OVC will indicate a thin layer. The letter V inserted between ceiling height and sky condition indicates that the ceiling is variable in height. A remark appended to the report shows the range of variability. When the sky is hidden by a surface based phenomenon, the symbols -X and X will continue to be used for partial obscuration and total obscuration respectively.

Each cloud layer will be separated from the layer above by leaving a space after each contraction. Prevailing visibility will follow the space after the contraction for the highest layer.

Even though observations, pilot reports, and forecasts using symbols will not be sent on any circuit common to another agency, such transmission internal to certain agencies (e.g. Air Force weather observer to Air Force tower) may continue to use symbols at that agency's option. The National Weather Service and the FAA, however, will use only contractions on both internal and external transmissions.

HOW DOES THE CHANGE AFFECT AVIATION WEATHER REPORTS? Examples of how Aviation Weather Reports (SA's) will appear on longline teletypewriter transmissions.

DCA 20 SCT M50 BKN 100 OVC 6k 175/75/68/3010/003/BKN V OVC
DCA M20 VBKN 12 175/75/68/3010/003/CIG 18V23
DCA M50 BKN 100 -OVC 3 GFK 175/75/71/3003/003/UA 5SW DCA 120 OVC 150
DCA -X M30 OVC 1/2F 175/75/72/3005/003/F6
DCA W3 X 1/2F 175/75/74/3004/003
DCA CLR 15 175/80/62/2912/003

HOW DOES THE CHANGE AFFECT TERMINAL FORECASTS (FT's)? Each forecast cloud layer will be separated from the layer above by leaving a space after each contraction. A space will always precede the forecast visibility (if any). The remainder of the forecast for each period will

DISTRIBUTION: ZC-307

Rev. 6/76

* Exam-O-Grams are non-directive in nature and are issued solely as an information service to individuals interested in Airman Written Examinations.

stay the same. Cloud groups mentioned in remarks will also follow the same procedures. The contractions and the symbols described above for SA's will be used with FT's also. A ceiling or obscuration forecast will be indicated by the letter C.

Example of FT's:

FT 152140

DCA 152222 10 SCT C18 BKN 5SW-3415G25 OCNL C8 X 1SW-. 12Z C50 OVC 3212G22
BRF C20 BKN 4SW-. 16Z MVFR CIG BCMG VFR AFT 21Z.

HOW DOES THE CHANGE AFFECT AREA FORECASTS (FA's)? Cloud cover symbols in the FA's were replaced with contractions on 9/11/73. The only change to the FA's will be the use of CLR instead of SKC to indicate a clear sky.

FAA Aeronautical Center
Flight Standards Technical Division, Operations Branch
P. O. Box 25082
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125 7/75
Exam-O-Grams available free of charge--single copy only per
request. Permission is hereby granted to reproduce this material.

-2-

VFR - No. 56
6/76