

PROPOSED CHANGE:

An amendment is proposed to FAR part 91.171(c). It is proposed that this section be expanded to allow for a VOR check against an installed IFR certified GPS receiver in addition to a check against a "second VOR receiver."

NEED FOR CHANGE:

The FAA is actively promoting a space-based navigation system with the goal of reducing ground-based navigation to only a minimal backup infrastructure. As these changes progress more and more aircraft are replacing a second VOR receiver and indicator with an IFR certified GPS receiver. While these provide a significant improvement in accuracy and safety, it means that the option of 91.171(c) [Dual VOR check] is no longer available.

In many parts of the country practical access to airborne or ground-based VOR check points are few and far between - certainly not available at the vast majority of smaller airports. VOT's are increasingly unavailable.

The remaining method (airborne check over a prominent landmark on the centerline of a victor airway) should not be the preferred method. It increases congestion on the airways and promotes "heads down" time over the landmark. True landmark accuracy is difficult (if not impossible in some parts of the country). This is reflected in the regulation, allowing a rather "loose" tolerance of 6 degrees under this sub-section.

BENEFITS:

Addition of a GPS cross-check would allow for tighter tolerances on the test (adjustments to magnetic heading from indicated radials can be made with existing AF/D published data). Reductions would be made in airway congestion. Compliance with the regulation would increase. All of these would improve safety.

Cost benefits would be realized due to reductions in unnecessary trips to airports with VOR/VOT test signals.