

# AERONAUTICAL CHARTING MEETING

## Charting Group

Meeting – October 24 - 25, 2018

### RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

FAA Control #18-02-328

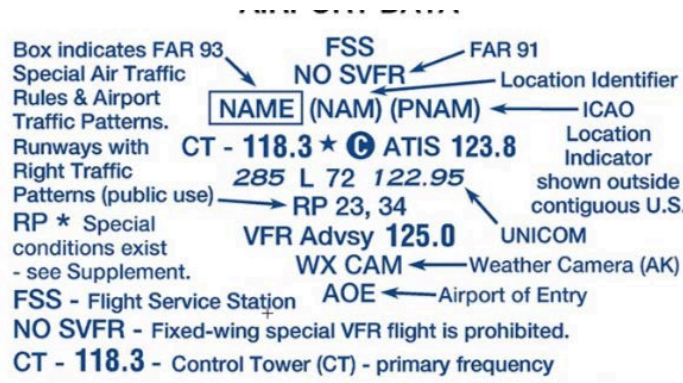
**Subject: Standardizing RP\* Notation to prevent pilot's from interpreting it as "Right Pattern, All Runways"**

#### **Background/Discussion:**

While this body has already considered the RP\* notation on at least three separate occasions (the latest Control #11-01-235), the notation continues to cause confusion amongst pilots.

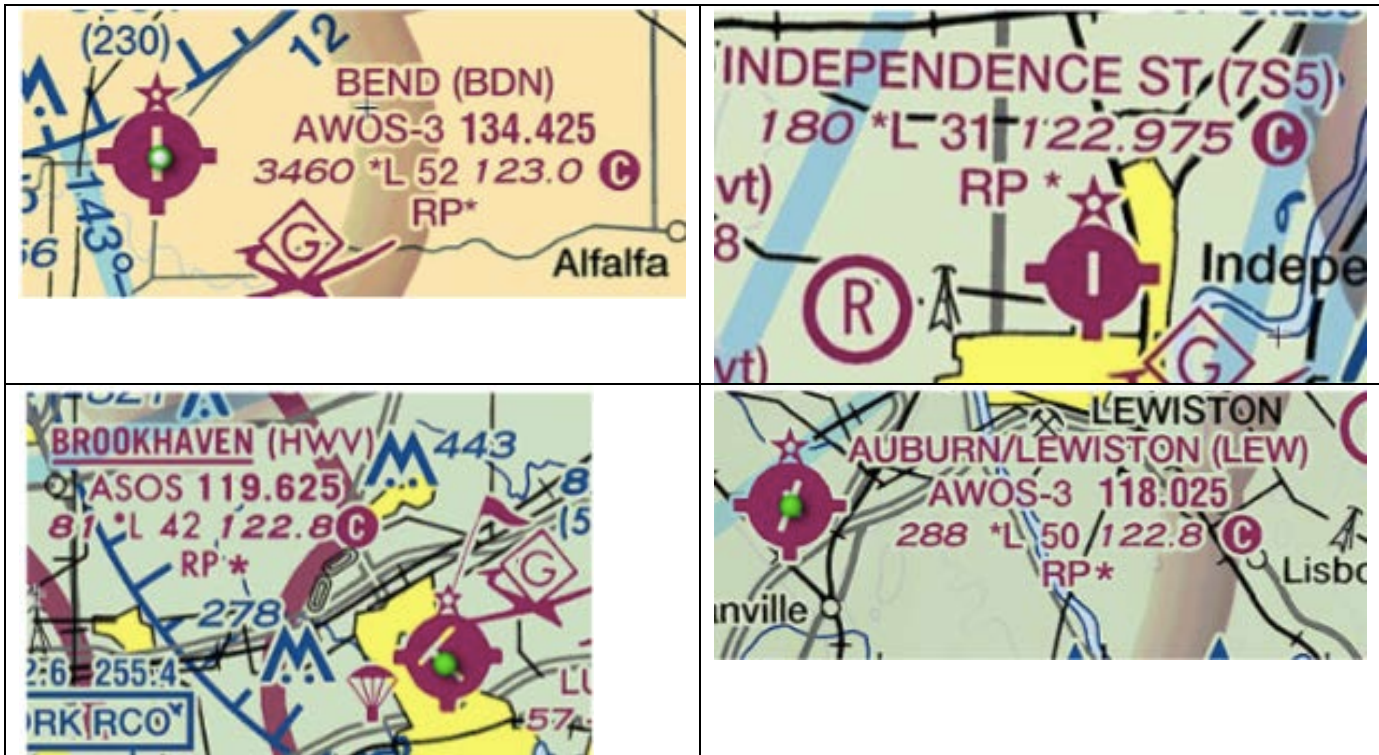
Whereas previously the charting group has considered this to be a pilot education issue, I'd like to focus on how the specific way the notation is written on charts actually helps *induce* pilots to wrongly interpret the information. Rather than simply not knowing what it is, the inconsistent way in which it is written is actively helping lead pilots to an incorrect interpretation of the symbol – namely, that RP \* means all runways have right traffic.

First, it is important to immediately concede that the documentation included in an aeronautical chart instructs pilots on what to do should they see RP\*:



However, as Mr. Ron Haag's review of airports with RP\* in 2012 indicated, there are very few of these symbols in use nationwide (50 in his count). Therefore, while at one point during training a pilot may have seen this information, that moment is dwarfed by the likely many, many, many more times where they have encountered RP with runway numbers afterwards. Even the main example included in the chart has the much more common RP <rw#>, <rw#>. The issue this causes is that pilots are conditioned to expect to see a *runway number* after RP.

More importantly, let's compare a few different ways this notation *actually* appears on charts:



While “\*” appears in these airports after RP in some way, it is incredibly inconsistent; Sometimes it is attached to RP, sometimes there is a space; sometimes it is bold, sometimes it is not; and most importantly, sometimes it is a superscript (RP<sup>\*</sup>) sometimes it is not (RP \*).

As an interface designer, I contend the latter is the most problematic in terms of inducing pilots to error. Given the font height and weight, pilots who aren’t well aware of the notation can easily interpret that the \* is substituting for runway markings – after all, they normally see runways in that same font size and location where that symbol is located! Therefore, it is easy to see why some of them would see the asterisk (especially when written as RP \*) as indicating that all runways are right pattern traffic, especially considering how in many industries \* is used as a wildcard symbol (for instance, in the popular SQL programming language, \* is used to denote “all items”)

When this issue was previously discussed, this body mentioned that there is a convention for using “\*” when pilots are supposed to refer to the chart supplement. However, in instances when that is the case (for instance, pilot controlled lighting), the asterisk *precedes* the symbol, and it is *always* written as a superscript (\*L)

**Recommendations:**

Standardize the RP<sup>\*</sup> to more closely match other chart notation. Along with pilot-controlled lighting, put the asterisk as *preceding* RP so as to avoid pilots thinking that the asterisk is there in place of runway numbers (\*RP). At the very least, ensure that the asterisk is applied consistently across all airports as a superscript, avoiding issues like what you see at KHWV which strongly lead a pilot into thinking that the \* is there in place of runway numbers.

**Comments:**

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**Date:** October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018