

AERONAUTICAL CHARTING MEETING
Charting Group
Meeting 18-01 – April 25–26, 2018

RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

FAA Control # 18-01-323

Subject: Standardizing Labeling of Parking Areas on Airport Diagrams

Background/Discussion:

The FAA develops Airport Diagrams to assist pilots navigating the surface of an airport. These charts are provided for all towered airports and select non-towered airports in accordance with JO 7910.4. For those airports with an Airport Diagram, the FAA charts the symbols and labels of parking areas and facilities located at that airport in “sufficient detail to facilitate visual orientation of aircraft while parked or taxiing” (IAC 4, Section 3.6.1). Authorized sources for parking and facility information include:

- AAS-100: Airport Engineering
- Airport District Office
- Airport Sponsor (e.g., Airport Manager, Airport Owner, Official Airport Engineering Consulting Firm)
- State Department of Aviation or Department of Transportation
- Air Traffic Control Tower manager

The FAA’s charting specification, IAC 4, for parking areas is vague as to how the cartographer should label these locations:

3.6.2.2.10.6 Parking areas and ramps; e.g., South, ANG, USN.

Essentially, the cartographer is obligated to chart what they are provided from the authorized source. In many cases, it is the airport sponsor who is volunteering this information. The requirement to accept what the airport sponsor has provided, with no vetting, has resulted in inconsistency and pilot confusion. In the last year, AOPA has collected over a thousand reports from General Aviation pilots concerned about transparency of airport and FBO services being provided at an airport. Many of these reports specifically note that the Airport Diagram needs to be consistent and standardize parking definitions.

Adjacent airports may use the same label for a parking area, such as “GA Parking,” but have a dissimilar meaning. For Airport Diagrams to be effective there must be standardization. As an example, the following terms can be found on current Airport Diagrams, and each term has a different definition depending on the airport. It is impractical for a pilot to determine the meaning of the parking label using the Airport Diagram as the only context.

Examples of General Aviation Parking Labels		
FBO	General Aviation	Ramp Office General Aviation Terminal
FBO Facilities Transient Parking	General Aviation Apron	Terminal/FBO
FBO General Aviation Ramp	General Aviation Parking	Tiedown
FBO Hangar	General Aviation Ramp	Tie-Down Apron
FBO Ramp	General Aviation Terminal	Transient Aircraft Parking
FBO/Transient Parking Overnight	General Aviation Terminal/FBO	Transient GA Parking/FBO
G.A. Apron	Itinerant Parking	Transient Parking
GA Apron	Main Apron	Transient Parking Short Term (Singles)
GA Parking	Parking and Tie-Down Apron	Transient Tiedowns
GA Terminal and Parking	Ramp	

There can be a variety of facilities on an airport (e.g., USCG, Flight School, etc.) and unique features (e.g., North Ramp, Transient Parking, etc.) that cannot be comprehensively accounted for in a single national list. A single list would be too limiting and impact the flexibility that is necessary for airports. However, clear definitions for a limited number of frequently used terms could facilitate basic standardization, account for the majority of uses, and provide clarity for the chart user. Providing a definition and charting specification for a shortened list of terms should not limit the flexibility afforded to the airport sponsor.

Recommendations:

To resolve the inconsistent use of parking terms and to clearly communicate the type of parking available to pilots, FAA charting should:

- Define in IAC specifications the common Airport Diagram parking area terms, as proposed below.
- Update FAA Order JO 7910.4 to inform FAA authorized sources of these definitions.
- Update Chart Users Guide, TPP, Pilot/Controller Glossary (PCG), and other relevant guidance to inform pilots of these definitions.

To promote standardization, we recommend the IAC Airport Diagram parking and ramp specification list a limited number of commonly used terms and their definitions. This list of terms would promote airport sponsors and the FAA using consistent and clear terms, while assisting pilots with navigation. Below is the proposed change to the IAC specification.

3.6.2.2.10.6 Parking areas and ramps; e.g., South, ANG, USN.

Individual parking areas, ramps, aprons, etc. should be labeled as defined by the source and in accordance with, to the extent practical, the following definitions (it is acceptable for a ramp to meet more than one definition and to be depicted using more than one label).

ALTERNATIVE ACCESS RAMP — A ramp area administered by the airport sponsor or a non-commercial entity where itinerant operators can park their aircraft.

FBO RAMP — A ramp area administered by the FBO or other commercial entity where operators can park their aircraft. No individual commercial names should appear on the government diagrams.

GENERAL AVIATION RAMP — A ramp area that defines an area of permanent parking for resident general aviation aircraft, i.e., tie-down area.

For purposes of this section, “apron” or “ramp” is a defined area on an airport or heliport intended to accommodate aircraft for purposes of loading or unloading passengers or cargo, refueling, parking, or maintenance. With regard to seaplanes, a ramp is used for access to the apron from the water.

Comments:

In combination with this effort, AOPA is advocating with FAA Office of Airports to update their relevant guidance to detail these same parking definitions and to encourage airport sponsors to update their Airport Diagrams to conform to these standards.

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Date: April 2, 2018