Federal Aviation Administration

Memorandum

Date: MAY 16 2011

To: [redacted], Director, En Route and Oceanic Operations, Central Service Area, AJE-C

From: [redacted], Director, En Route and Oceanic Safety and Operations Support, AJE-3

Subject: Request for Interpretation of Visual Separation and Approaches

We have reviewed your request for interpretation of "Visual Separation and Approaches" with the question of, "Is a clearance to maintain visual separation with another aircraft negated if the controller then gives a clearance for a visual approach to an airport in sight?"

Upon review of the scenario attached by Kansas City ARTCC, described below, the visual separation clearance issued is negated by the clearance for visual approach.

Aircraft A destined for Salina, KS (SLN) is at 12,000 feet approximately 30 miles east of the field. Aircraft B, en route to Appleton, WI (ATW) is at 11,000 feet northbound between Aircraft A and SLN. Aircraft A has requested lower, and upon receiving traffic, calls Aircraft B in sight. Aircraft A is then issued instructions to maintain visual separation from Aircraft B, descend and maintain 6,000 feet, and to call SLN in sight for a visual approach. Less than a minute later, Aircraft A calls SLN in sight. Aircraft A has yet to pass by Aircraft B. Aircraft A is issued the visual approach to SLN.

Per the paragraph attached, 7110.65, 7-4-3, b. resolve potential conflicts with all other aircraft, and PHRASEOLOGY- the (Call sign) (**control instructions as required**) CLEARED VISUAL APPROACH TO (airport name), validates the requirement that once aircraft A was cleared for the visual approach, that aircraft must be instructed again to maintain visual separation from aircraft B. Once a pilot has received a clearance for a visual approach, there are no explicit limitations on a pilot's ability to maneuver laterally or vertically (to include a climb), to remain clear of clouds, and/or obstructions, and to maintain flight visibility. The inclusion of "control instructions as required" is necessary to ensure that the pilot understands that he/she is still responsible for maintaining visual separation from the other aircraft even though a visual approach clearance was received. "Control instructions as required" would also apply to altitude restrictions, speed assignments, or any other instruction required to ensure that potential conflicts are resolved.

If you have any questions, or desire further information, please contact [redacted] En Route Operations Standards Manager, at [redacted].