

Clarification for Piloting Instructors

The intent of the new Piloting instructions are very similar to what it has been done in the past with regard to position plotting, with the exception that most positions will now be a GPS Fix in place of the former DR, and we are attempting to be more practical by stating that the position should be plotted approximately every hour. As stated in the text, sometimes an hourly position is not sufficient (as when passing through an area requiring numerous changes of direction) and sometimes it may be too frequent (as when making an extended passage through an unobstructed area as when passing along a clear coastline). For example if a position was plotted at 1040 when passing along an open coast line, it is not essential to plot an 1100 position, especially if a course change is anticipated within the next 15 or 20 minutes.

The students still need to understand how to plot a DR and when it is appropriate to use one. Many points are being lost on exams for lack of this understanding. For example, if one has been proceeding for 20 minutes from a Fix and then a course change is called for but no new position data is given, a DR should be shown at the point where the course change is made. Use of a DR would also be appropriate at the suspected location where bearings for a Fix are to be taken (the location is not certain until the Fix is determined). Whenever the position is uncertain the location should be identified as a DR position, and if it is certain it would be a Fix.

Another area where there often seems to be misunderstanding is with regard to plotting of periodic Fixes that are not on the replanned course.

If the Fix is within the prequalified width from the intended course, it is not necessary to restart the course line at the new Fix. The GPS Fix (or any other type of Fix for that matter) should be plotted and the intended course continue to be used. If however the plotted Fix is outside the prequalified width, the course should be restarted from the new Fix and corrected course actions should be taken and noted on the new course line.

The waypoints and waypoint symbols are also often not used correctly. A waypoint can be identified at a charted ATON simply by placing the waypoint label near the ATON. If there is no ATON where a waypoint is needed, the waypoint symbol (a square with a cross inscribed) is shown at the location and the chosen waypoint label indicated nearby. If the point later becomes a Fix, a circle is placed around the waypoint symbol and the time label added for the Fix.

A quick way of stating all of this was a recent comment by one Piloting Exam Evaluator,

“many students do not seem to know what

- 1) A WP symbol looks like, nor when to use it.*
- 2) Some do not seem to know where Distance is measured from, i.e., Fix and not DR.*
- 3) There also seems to be some difficulty in learning to write labels parallel to the bottom of chart.*
- 4) That reverse course directions are not required or necessary on the chart.*
- 5) The info on the chart should be as clear as possible and not written over other info.”*

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