Section 6. Operational Policy/Procedures for Reduced Vertical Separation Minimum (RVSM) in the Domestic U.S., Alaska, Offshore Airspace and the San Juan FIR

4–6–1. Applicability and RVSM Mandate (Date/Time and Area)

a. Applicability. The policies, guidance and direction in this section apply to RVSM operations in the airspace over the lower 48 states, Alaska, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico High Offshore Airspace and airspace in the San Juan FIR where VHF or UHF voice direct controller−pilot communication (DCPC) is normally available. Policies, guidance and direction for RVSM operations in oceanic airspace where VHF or UHF voice DCPC is not available and the airspace of other countries can be found in the Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP), Part II−En Route, ENR 1. General Rules and Procedures, and ENR 7.Oceanic Operations.

b. Requirement. The FAA implemented RVSM between flight level (FL) 290−410 (inclusive) in the following airspace: the airspace of the lower 48 states of the United States, Alaska, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico High Offshore Airspace and the San Juan FIR. RVSM has been implemented worldwide and may be applied in all ICAO Flight Information Regions (FIR).

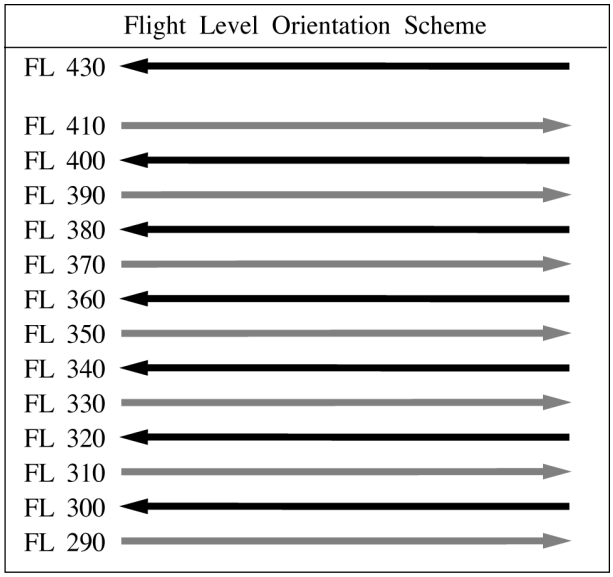
c. RVSM Authorization. In accordance with 14 CFR Section 91.180, with only limited exceptions, prior to operating in RVSM airspace, operators must comply with the standards of Part 91, Appendix G, and be authorized by the Administrator. If either the operator or the operator's aircraft have not met the applicable RVSM standards, the aircraft will be referred to as a "non−RVSM" aircraft. Paragraph 4−6−10 discusses ATC policies for accommodation of non−RVSM aircraft flown by the Department of Defense, Air Ambulance (MEDEVAC) operators, foreign State governments and aircraft flown for certification and development. Paragraph 4−6−11, Non−RVSM Aircraft Requesting Climb to and Descent from Flight Levels Above RVSM Airspace Without Intermediate Level Off, contains policies for non−RVSM aircraft climbing and descending through RVSM airspace to/from flight levels above RVSM airspace.

d. Benefits. RVSM enhances ATC flexibility, mitigates conflict points, enhances sector throughput, reduces controller workload and enables crossing traffic. Operators gain fuel savings and operating efficiency benefits by flying at more fuel efficient flight levels and on more user preferred routings.

4–6–2. Flight Level Orientation Scheme

Altitude assignments for direction of flight follow a scheme of odd altitude assignment for magnetic courses 000−179 degrees and even altitudes for magnetic courses 180−359 degrees for flights up to and including FL 410, as indicated in FIG 4−6−1.

FIG 4−6−1
Flight Level Orientation Scheme



NOTE−
Odd Flight Levels: Magnetic Course 000−179 Degrees
Even Flight Levels: Magnetic Course 180−359 Degrees.

4–6–3. Aircraft and Operator Approval Policy/Procedures, RVSM Monitoring and Databases for Aircraft and Operator Approval

a. RVSM Authority. 14 CFR Section 91.180 applies to RVSM operations within the U.S. 14 CFR Section 91.706 applies to RVSM operations outside