

VDA does not guarantee obstacle protection below the MDA in the visual segment. The presence of a VDA does not change any nonprecision approach requirements.

1. Obstacles may penetrate the obstacle identification surface below the MDA in the visual segment of an IAP that has a published VDA/TCH. When the VDA/TCH is not authorized due to an obstacle penetration that would require a pilot to deviate from the VDA between MDA and touchdown, the VDA/TCH will be replaced with the note “Visual Segment- Obstacles” in the profile view of the IAP (See FIG 5-4-14). Accordingly, pilots are advised to carefully review approach procedures to identify where the optimum stabilized descent to landing can be initiated. Pilots that follow the previously published descent angle, provided by the RNAV system, below the MDA on procedures with this note may encounter obstacles in the visual segment. Pilots must visually avoid any obstacles below the MDA.

(a) VDA/TCH data is furnished by FAA on the official source document for publication on IAP charts and for coding in the navigation database unless, as noted previously, replaced by the note “Visual Segment – Obstacles.”

(b) Commercial chart providers and navigation systems may publish or calculate a VDA/TCH even when the FAA does not provide such data. Pilots

are cautioned that they are responsible for obstacle avoidance in the visual segment regardless of the presence or absence of a VDA/TCH and associated navigation system advisory vertical guidance.

2. The threshold crossing height (TCH) used to compute the descent angle is published with the VDA. The VDA and TCH information are charted on the profile view of the IAP following the fix (FAF/stepdown) used to compute the VDA. If no PA/APV IAP is established to the same runway, the VDA will be equal to or higher than the glide path angle of the VGSI installed on the same runway provided it is within instrument procedure criteria. A chart note will indicate if the VGSI is not coincident with the VDA. Pilots must be aware that the published VDA is for advisory information only and not to be considered instrument procedure derived vertical guidance. The VDA solely offers an aid to help pilots establish a continuous, stabilized descent during final approach.

3. Pilots may use the published angle and estimated/actual groundspeed to find a target rate of descent from the rate of descent table published in the back of the U.S. Terminal Procedures Publication. This rate of descent can be flown with the Vertical Velocity Indicator (VVI) in order to use the VDA as an aid to flying a stabilized descent. No special equipment is required.

FIG 5-4-14  
Example of a Chart Note

