Southeast Alaska Aviation Overview

Introduction:

Southeast Alaska has some unique flying conditions that pilots should become acquainted with before arriving in the region. Like much of the state, most communities here are not connected by roads. Combined with a relatively low frequency of service from the Alaska Marine Highway ferry system, this makes air travel a primary means of transportation. The terrain in this region consists largely of fjords, flanked by higher terrain, which channels low altitude flight along constricted routes. Marine weather conditions often add to the challenge of flight safety in this environment, with low ceilings, fog and poor visibility common, and at other times turbulence from high winds burbling over the terrain from high pressure systems inland.

A seasonal tourism industry also creates high volume of traffic sharing this airspace, with a combination of air taxi flights, flight seeing operations with a mix of wheeled planes, seaplanes, and helicopters. Add airliners arriving and departing using IFR procedures, all are sharing the same airspace. From experience gained by the aviation industry over the years, special routes, flight altitudes, and conventions have been developed to reduce the risk of mid-air collisions. Visitors are strongly encouraged to become familiar with the operational details from the overview provided here, and the links to route- specific information contained in Letter Of Agreements (LOA) developed in conjunction with the FAA.

CTAF Areas:

In Alaska, Common Traffic Advisory Frequencies (CTAFs) may be assigned to an area, as opposed to a specific airport or landing area. The adjacent figure shows CTAFs for providing position reports when flying in these areas. In addition to visual scanning, reporting positions, altitude, and direction periodically on the appropriate CTAF frequency helps pilots maintain situational awareness with other aircraft in the vicinity.

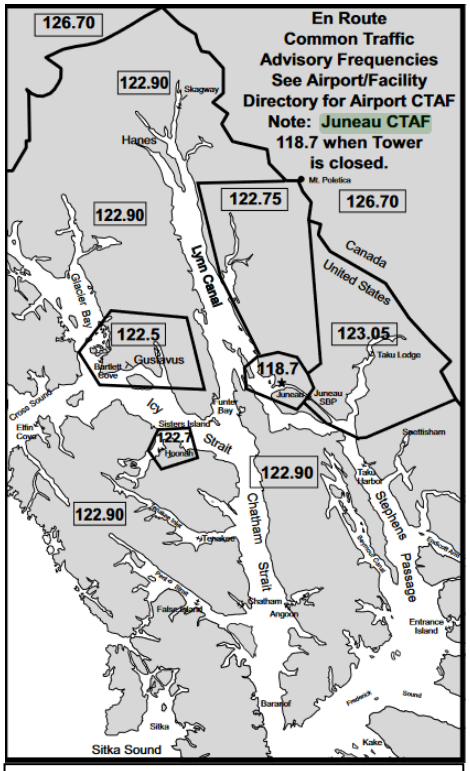


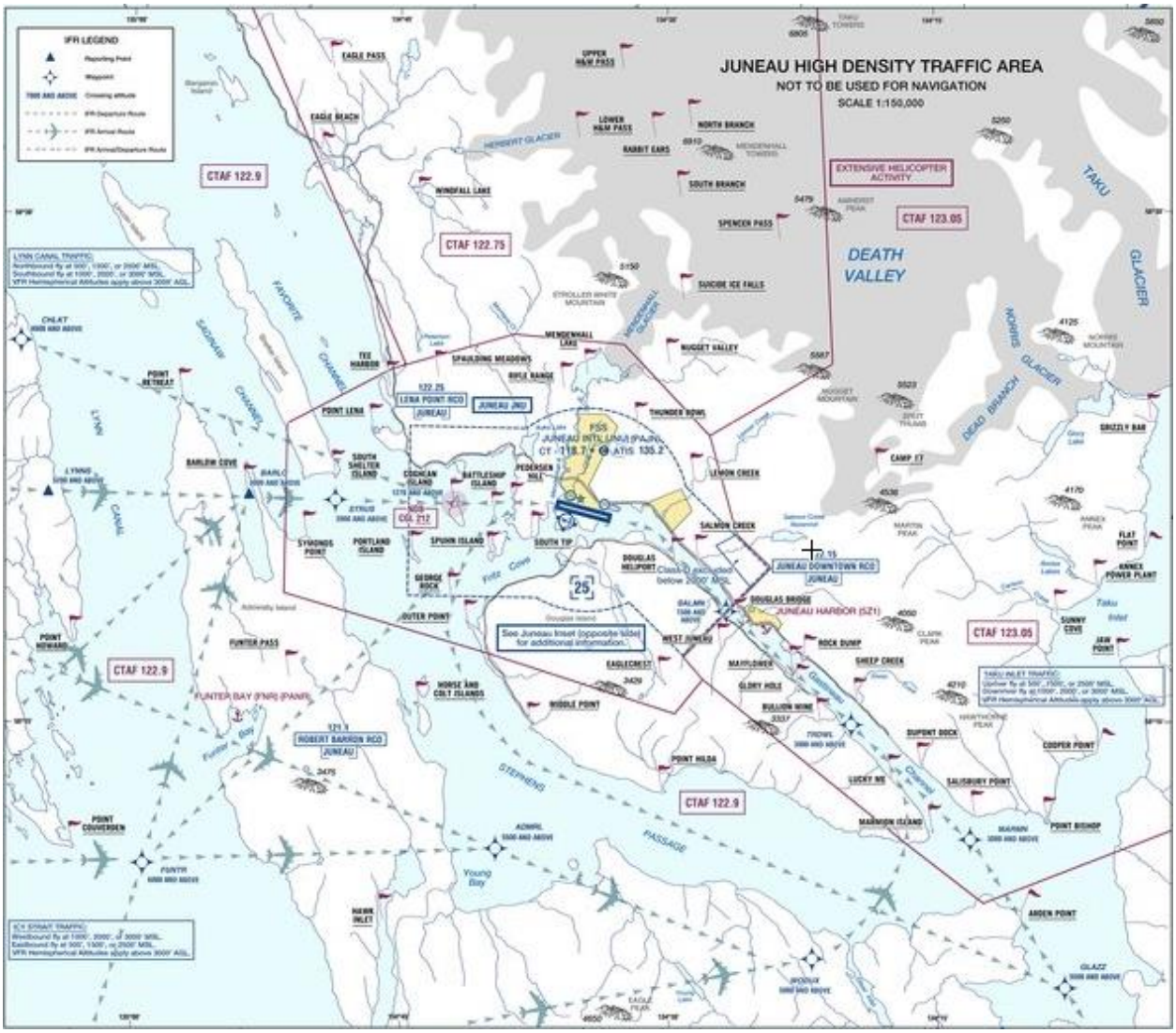
Figure 1. Enroute CTAFs for northern half of southeast Alaska. This figure may be found in the Alaska Chart Supplement Notices Section.

Flight Service Stations:

The FAA operates the Flight Service Program in Alaska. Juneau is the location of a Flight Service Station operated 24 hours a day. Other part time facilities are located at Sitka and Ketchikan. Flight Service can provide visiting pilots with additional information on routes, weather reporting systems, and details to help plan flights in this region.

Juneau High Density Traffic Area:

The FAA has created an insert on the Juneau Supplement which shows (a) CTAF areas in the immediate Juneau area, (b) a network of VFR reporting points to help pilots maintain situational awareness and (c) IFR departure and arrival routes, along with key IFR fixes. Due to the airspace confined by terrain, airliners flying GPS approaches are sharing airspace with commuter and general GA traffic.



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Flight Routes:

Based on agreements with individual operators defined in the LOA, there are special altitudes and designated routes covering this area. Details may be found in the LOA, which is available online at the following industry-maintained website: https://sites.google.com/site/juneauloa/

Similar conventions apply to Ketchikan and surrounding areas. Special air traffic rules and Part 93 airspace are in effect when Ketchikan Flight Service Station is open, requiring pilots to contact FSS prior

to entering the Class E Surface airspace. For information on conventions and CTAF frequencies in this area see: https://www.tapa.pro/

For more information:

If you have specific questions or need additional information, please contact the following:

Juneau Flight Service (24 hour operations): (907) 586–7382

Ketchikan Flight Service (0615 to 2115 local, Alaska Standard Time): 907-225-9481

Sitka Flight Service (0600 – 21:45 local, Alaska Standard TIme): 907-966-2221/2222

Information on the Flight Service Stations in southeast Alaska including special traffic rules, VFR check points and CTAF areas is available online.