Subject: Visual Approach Guide

Background

FOQA and ASAP data indicate a need to mitigate inadequate visual approach planning. Crew errors during visual approaches include loss of terrain, obstacle and airspace awareness, early descents when cleared the visual approach, and violations of stabilized approach criteria without conducting a mandatory go-around. Publication of the Visual Approach Guide formalizes procedures and considerations to enable a successful approach.

Like all approach guides in the NOI section of Volume 1, reference to the Visual Approach Guide during the approach brief is not mandatory, but compliance with the published guidelines is necessary to execute a satisfactory visual approach. The guide is published below and is effective immediately upon receipt of this Fleet Bulletin.

Visual Approach
Approach Guide

Company Pages ..... Review

Underlying approach procedure (if available) ..... Select and verify

Use of an underlying approach is required, if available.

Note: If available, the ILS glideslope will be used between the final approach fix and published DH. Use normal flight path management to remain at or above the glideslope.

Note: If available, stay at or above the VASI/PAPI until a lower altitude is necessary for a safe landing.

Flight and nav instruments (if applicable) ..... Set

Minimums ..... Set

- Set underlying approach minima.
- If no instrument approach is available, any number may be set to aid in the approach. Both the captain's and first officer's reference bugs should agree.

Vertical guidance ..... Brief

- Calculate 3:1 descent path in absence of internal or external vertical guidance.
- For night approaches, use instrument approach vertical guidance, when available.

WARNING: Descent below a 3:1 path to the runway may result in an ATC-issued LOW ALTITUDE ALERT.

Terrain/Obstacle Awareness ..... Brief

- If operable, at least one pilot should have GPWS terrain mode displayed.
- Brief MSA relative to airport field elevation to aid in approach, configuration, and go-around planning.

WARNING: When cleared for a visual approach, do not begin descent until terrain/obstacle clearance is assured.

Use of automation ..... Brief

MCP Altitude ..... Set

- Set MCP altitude in accordance with the underlying approach procedure, or 1,500 feet AFE if not using an underlying approach.

Applicable descent/approach modes ..... Select

- Plan approach to join final beyond 5NM from the runway threshold.
- For a nighttime approach, unless authorized by Company Pages, maintain MSA/MVA or last assigned altitude until established on a segment of the underlying approach, then comply with approach altitude restrictions.
- In absence of an underlying approach, terrain clearance must be visually assured.
- Do not descend below 1,500 feet AFE until established on a 3:1 descent path.

If a go-around is required, until receipt of controller instructions, climb straight ahead, or as terrain dictates, to the standard pattern altitude of 1,500 feet.

Summary

During the next revision, a new Visual Approach Guide will be added to the Normal Ops Info Section of Volume 1.

Approved by:

Jeff Handel	Jim Hamilton	Wendy Davison
MD-88/90	MD-88/90	MD-88/90
Fleet Captain	Chief Line Check Pilot	Technical Manager