ALPA Operations Bulletin
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New Canadian SID and STAR Phraseology

On February 9, 2012, Canada will implement SID / STAR phraseology requiring aircraft to comply with published SID / STAR altitude restrictions ***unless specifically cancelled by ATC***. This change differs from FAA procedures outlined in AIM 4-4-10g which states that any new altitude clearance cancels any previous altitude restriction unless that restriction is restated. To summarize:

- In Canada, an aircraft assigned a new altitude on a SID / STAR is still expected to comply with all altitude restrictions.
- In the US, an aircraft assigned a new altitude on a SID / STAR deletes all published altitude restrictions.

Canadian and US phraseology differences that are summarized in the tables below:

ATC Instructions - FAA	FAA Requirements
DESCEND VIA (STAR Designation)	Requires the aircraft to navigate laterally and vertically to meet all published restrictions depicted on the STAR.
(Aircraft already on a STAR) DESCEND AND MAINTAIN (altitude)	Aircraft may descend unrestricted to the assigned altitude unless published restrictions are reissued.
COMPLY WITH RESTRICTIONS	Aircraft must comply with all published restrictions. May be used in lieu of re-issuing individual restrictions.

There is no "DESCEND VIA" in Canada.

ATC Instructions – Canada	Canada/ICAO Requirements
VIA (STAR designator) DESCEND TO (altitude) or CLEARED (approach procedure)	Clearance via a STAR authorizes the aircraft to follow the STAR lateral track only. Once ATC issues descent or approach clearance, published altitude restrictions above the assigned altitude remain mandatory unless specifically cancelled by ATC.
(Aircraft already on a STAR) DESCEND TO (altitude)	Published altitudes above the assigned altitude remain mandatory unless specifically cancelled by ATC.
DESCEND TO (altitude), ALL STAR ALTITUDE RESTRICTIONS CANCELLED or DESCEND TO (altitude), ALTITUDE RESTRICTION AT (fix) CANCELLED	Examples of ATC phraseology for cancelling altitude restrictions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Follow company guidance, SOP, and flight manual procedures.
- If the FAA is providing ATC services, follow FAA procedures, even if over Canadian airspace.
- If Canada is providing ATC services, follow Canadian procedures, even if over US airspace.
- When in doubt, ask ATC!

While Canada is making this change to better align with ICAO standards, ALPA is continuing to work with FAA and NAV CANADA to better align US and Canadian procedures going forward.

Please provide any feedback to your Central Air Safety Committee and to EAS@alpa.org.

Captain Chuck Hogeman
Aviation Safety Chairman

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