



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

InFO

Information for Operators

InFO 12003
DATE: 02/14/12

Flight Standards Service
Washington, DC

http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/info

An InFO contains valuable information for operators that should help them meet certain administrative, regulatory, or operational requirements with relatively low urgency or impact on safety.

Subject: Differences between United States and Canadian Air Traffic Control (ATC) Phraseology on Standard Terminal Arrivals (STAR)

Purpose: This InFO serves to explain the differences in phraseology flightcrews can expect when issued a STAR by Canadian ATC when operating in Canadian Airspace.

Background: Flightcrews operating in the U.S. National Airspace System (NAS) are familiar with "Descend Via" phraseology when issued a clearance to descend on a STAR. Beginning February 9, 2012, Nav Canada will implement procedures phraseology at all locations that is different from those used in the U.S.

Discussion: Flightcrews must remain alert for phraseology differences when operating in Canadian Airspace, regarding published STAR altitude restrictions by Canadian ATC. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has implemented STAR procedures utilizing "DESCEND VIA (STAR designator)" phraseology to indicate to flightcrews that compliance with the lateral track and vertical profile of the STAR is required. In this case, if ATC assigns an altitude to a flightcrew following a STAR, whether or not "DESCEND VIA" has been issued; **any published altitude restrictions are cancelled unless reissued by ATC.** This is opposite to the Canada/ International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) procedure in which published SID/STAR altitude restrictions **remain** mandatory unless specifically cancelled by ATC. Flightcrews are advised to query ATC if there is any doubt regarding altitude restrictions when cleared for a STAR in Canadian Airspace.

Recommended Action: Program Managers, Directors of Operations, Directors of Safety, Pilots, dispatchers, flight planning services and flight followers should review the following table and information found on the NavCanada website; http://www.navcanada.ca/ContentDefinitionFiles/Publications/AeronauticalInfoProducts/AIP/Next/PDF/EN/part_5_aic/5aic_eng_2010_21.pdf

ATC Instructions – FAA	FAA Requirements
DESCEND VIA (STAR designator)	Requires the aircraft to navigate laterally and vertically to meet all published restrictions depicted in the STAR
(Aircraft already following a STAR) DESCEND TO AND MAINTAIN (altitude)	Unless restrictions are reissued, the aircraft may descend unrestricted to the assigned altitude.
COMPLY WITH RESTRICTIONS	Requires the aircraft to comply with published restrictions and may be used in lieu of reissuing individual restrictions.
ATC Instruction – NAV 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 following a STAR:) DESCEND TO (altitude)	Published altitude restrictions 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 canceling altitude restrictions.

Contact: Questions or comments regarding this InFO should be directed to John Swigart, Performance Based Flight Systems Branch, AFS-470 at (202) 385-4589.