

# ATC'S WEATHER-AVOIDANCE RESPONSIBILITY

Air traffic controllers have many responsibilities, the primary one of which is to separate airplanes operating on an IFR clearance from each other. But the FAA also requires them to advise pilots when precipitation is observed, to wit:

**PRECIPITATION RADAR WEATHER DESCRIPTIONS—** Existing radar systems cannot detect turbulence. However, there is a direct correlation between the degree of turbulence and other weather features associated with thunderstorms and the weather radar precipitation intensity. Controllers will issue (where capable) precipitation intensity as observed by radar.... When intensity levels can be determined, they shall be described as:

- a. LIGHT (< 30 dBZ)
- b. MODERATE (30 to 40 dBZ)
- c. HEAVY (> 40 to 50 dBZ)
- d. EXTREME (> 50 dBZ)

