

Alternatives

If the weather sucks badly enough to require filing an alternate, it's also bad enough to research the backup destination's Notams and facilities. You do this to ensure what you expect will be available when you get there in fact will be. Few things are worse than missing the approach at your intended destination and having ATC advise your alternate is closed for runway resurfacing. Even if your solid-gold alternate was wide open, with everything up and running, some nummy can gear-up his flivver on the main runway, forcing you to execute something other than the ILS you'd anticipated.

Of course, you know the alternate rule by heart, right? For the hour before and after your flight-plan arrival time, the forecast at your destination airport must be no worse than 2000 feet overcast with visibility no less than three miles. If it isn't, you need to file an alternate.

In turn, the alternate must meet certain criteria. The FAA distilled down the language describing standard alternate minimums to an uncharacteristically brief few lines. They're found on page M1 in each terminal procedures volume the FAA/Aeronav publishes and above in the top graphic.

Which would cover it if all airports uses the same alternate minimums. Some can't, for a variety of reasons. When they don't, pilots need to refer to the alternate minimums, also found in the terminal procedures volumes and also included in the top graphic above.

We've also included an excerpt from that listing of alternate minimums, for the Wichita, Kan., area. That's in the second graphic, above, wherein we've highlighted in yellow the data for the Wichita Mid-Continent Airport.

INSTRUMENT APPROACH PROCEDURE CHARTS

IFR ALTERNATE AIRPORT MINIMUMS

Standard alternate minimums for non-precision approaches are 800-2 (NDB, VOR, LOC, TACAN, LDA, VORTAC, VOR/DME, ASR or WAAS LNAV); for precision approaches 600-2 (ILS or PAR). Airports within this geographical area that require alternate minimums other than standard or alternate minimums with restrictions are listed below. NA - means alternate minimums are not authorized due to unmonitored facility or absence of weather reporting service. Civil pilots see FAR 91. IFR Alternate Airport Minimums: Ceiling and Visibility Minimums not applicable to USA/USN/USAF. Pilots must review the IFR Alternate Airport Minimums Notes for alternate airfield suitability.

NAME ALTERNATE MINIMUMS

WICHITA, KS

COLONEL JAMES

JABARA (AAO) ILS or LOC/DME Rwy 18¹
RNAV (GPS) Rwy 18²
RNAV (GPS) Rwy 36²
RNAV (GPS)-E²
VOR-A²

NA when local weather not available.

¹ILS, Category D, 700-2¼; LOC, Category D, 800-2¼.

²Category D, 800-2¼.

WICHITA MID-
CONTINENT (ICT) ILS or LOC Rwy 1L¹
ILS or LOC Rwy 1R¹
ILS Rwy 19R¹
ILS or LOC Rwy 19L²
RNAV (GPS) Rwy 1R²
VOR Rwy 14³

¹LOC, Category E, 800-2¼.

²Category E, 800-2¼.

³Category A, B, 900-2; Category C, 900-2¾; Category D, 900-3.