Potomac TRACON SOP Rev F

Change Summary & Overview

2 July 2025

ZDCARTCC
WASHINGTON DC

Overview

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- General Background & Information
- Navigation, Hyperlinks, and Quick Access
- Organizational Philosophy
- Sectorization Plan Changes
- Consolidation and Deconsolidation
- Autotrack and Tower Assumed Radar Identification
- Frequency Management Standards
- IDS Usage Requirements

- IDS Usage Requirements

- DUALS and TRIPS at Dulles
- Prearranged Coordination Procedures (P-ACP)
- PCT to ZNY during ZDC closure
- Departure Scratchpads and Departure Gate Realignment
- Arrival Airport Scratchpad Procedures & Standardization
- Area Chart Packages

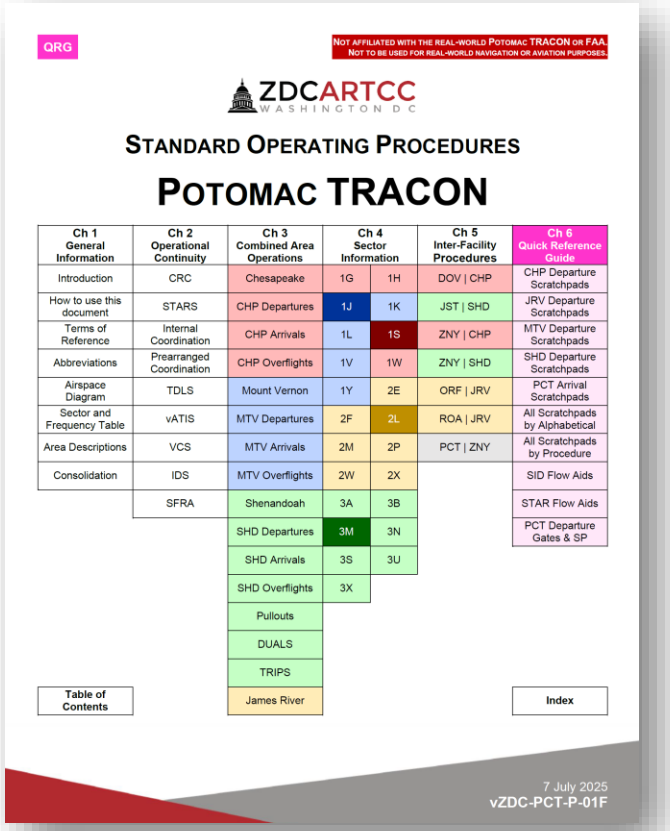
General Background & Information

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- Last year the center SOP was revamped to incorporate in-document linking to improve usability and make it fast and simple to quickly find important and frequently used elements of the publication.
- To build consistency across vZDC, the PCT SOP was the next major publication due for review. During the revision process, the current SOP was rebuilt from the ground up to match the organization and style of the center SOP. This helps build consistency for all controllers while also improving the usability of the publication.
- Due to sectorization changes at the center, and to incorporate sectorization changes within PCT, while also ensuring alignment with LOA changes, this SOP includes numerous minor revisions while also introducing several major changes in the way PCT will operate.
- All PCT controllers must review the SOP – this document is a high-level overview and summary of changes *only*.

Navigation | Publication Directories

- There are three main “directories” with in the SOP: The Front Page directory, the Quick Reference Guide, and the Table of Contents.
- The text throughout these is hyperlinked and labeled to help aid controllers identify and access important elements quickly with only one or two clicks.


QRG

NOT AFFILIATED WITH THE REAL-WORLD POTOMAC TRACON OR FAA.
NOT TO BE USED FOR REAL-WORLD NAVIGATION OR AVIATION PURPOSES.

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON D C

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

POTOMAC TRACON

Ch 1 General Information	Ch 2 Operational Continuity	Ch 3 Combined Area Operations	Ch 4 Sector Information		Ch 5 Inter-Facility Procedures	Ch 6 Quick Reference Guide
Introduction	CRC	Chesapeake	1G	1H	DOV | CHP	CHP Departure Scratchpads
How to use this document	STARS	CHP Departures	1J	1K	JST | SHD	JRV Departure Scratchpads
Terms of Reference	Internal Coordination	CHP Arrivals	1L	1S	ZNY | CHP	MTV Departure Scratchpads
Abbreviations	Prearranged Coordination	CHP Overflights	1V	1W	ZNY | SHD	SHD Departure Scratchpads
Airspace Diagram	TDLS	Mount Vernon	1Y	2E	ORF | JRV	PCT Arrival Scratchpads
Sector and Frequency Table	vATIS	MTV Departures	2F	2L	ROA | JRV	All Scratchpads by Alphabetical
Area Descriptions	VCS	MTV Arrivals	2M	2P	PCT | ZNY	All Scratchpads by Procedure
Consolidation	IDS	MTV Overflights	2W	2X		SID Flow Aids
	SFRA	Shenandoah	3A	3B		STAR Flow Aids
		SHD Departures	3M	3N		PCT Departure Gates & SP
		SHD Arrivals	3S	3U		
		SHD Overflights	3X			
		Pullouts				
		DUALS				
		TRIPS				
Table of Contents		James River				Index

7 July 2025
vZDC-PCT-P-01F

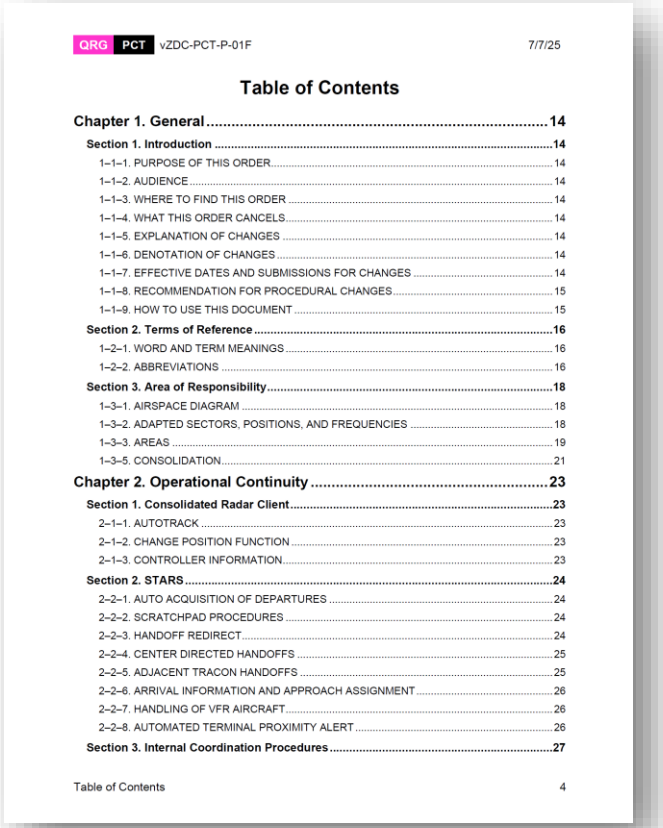
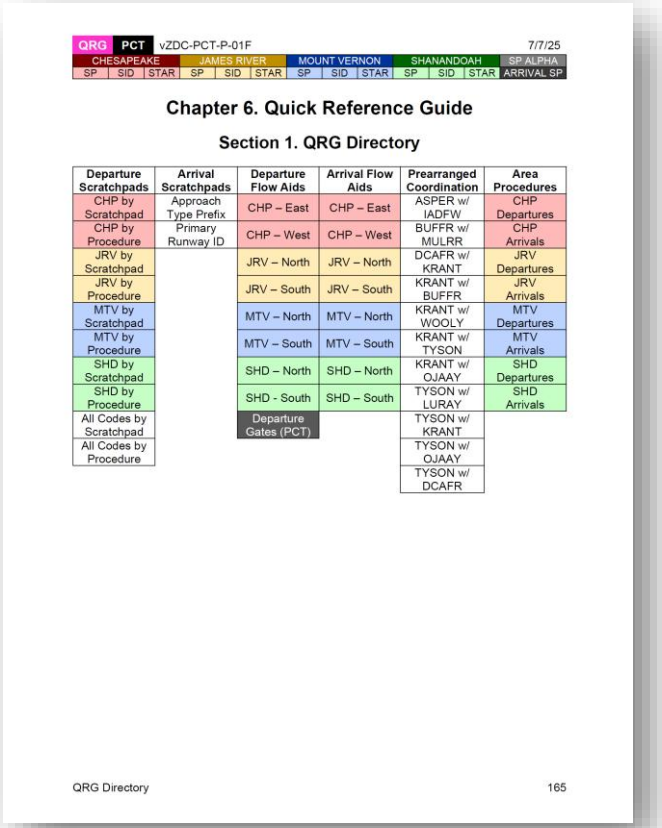

QRG PCT vZDC-PCT-P-01F 7/7/25

Table of Contents

Chapter 1. General 14
Section 1. Introduction 14
1–1–1. PURPOSE OF THIS ORDER 14
1–1–2. AUDIENCE 14
1–1–3. WHERE TO FIND THIS ORDER 14
1–1–4. WHAT THIS ORDER CANCELS 14
1–1–5. EXPLANATION OF CHANGES 14
1–1–6. DENOTATION OF CHANGES 14
1–1–7. EFFECTIVE DATES AND SUBMISSIONS FOR CHANGES 14
1–1–8. RECOMMENDATION FOR PROCEDURAL CHANGES 15
1–1–9. HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT 15
Section 2. Terms of Reference 16
1–2–1. WORD AND TERM MEANINGS 16
1–2–2. ABBREVIATIONS 16
Section 3. Area of Responsibility 18
1–3–1. AIRSPACE DIAGRAM 18
1–3–2. ADAPTED SECTORS, POSITIONS, AND FREQUENCIES 18
1–3–3. AREAS 19
1–3–5. CONSOLIDATION 21
Chapter 2. Operational Continuity 23
Section 1. Consolidated Radar Client 23
2–1–1. AUTOTRACK 23
2–1–2. CHANGE POSITION FUNCTION 23
2–1–3. CONTROLLER INFORMATION 23
Section 2. STARS 24
2–2–1. AUTO ACQUISITION OF DEPARTURES 24
2–2–2. SCRATCHPAD PROCEDURES 24
2–2–3. HANDOFF REDIRECT 24
2–2–4. CENTER DIRECTED HANDOFFS 25
2–2–5. ADJACENT TRACON HANDOFFS 25
2–2–6. ARRIVAL INFORMATION AND APPROACH ASSIGNMENT 26
2–2–7. HANDLING OF VFR AIRCRAFT 26
2–2–8. AUTOMATED TERMINAL PROXIMITY ALERT 26
Section 3. Internal Coordination Procedures 27

Table of Contents 4


QRG PCT vZDC-PCT-P-01F 7/7/25

CHESAPEAKE (SP | SID | STAR) JAMES RIVER (SP | SID | STAR) MOUNT VERNON (SP | SID | STAR) SHANANDOAH (SP | SID | STAR) SP ALPHA (ARRIVAL SP)

Chapter 6. Quick Reference Guide

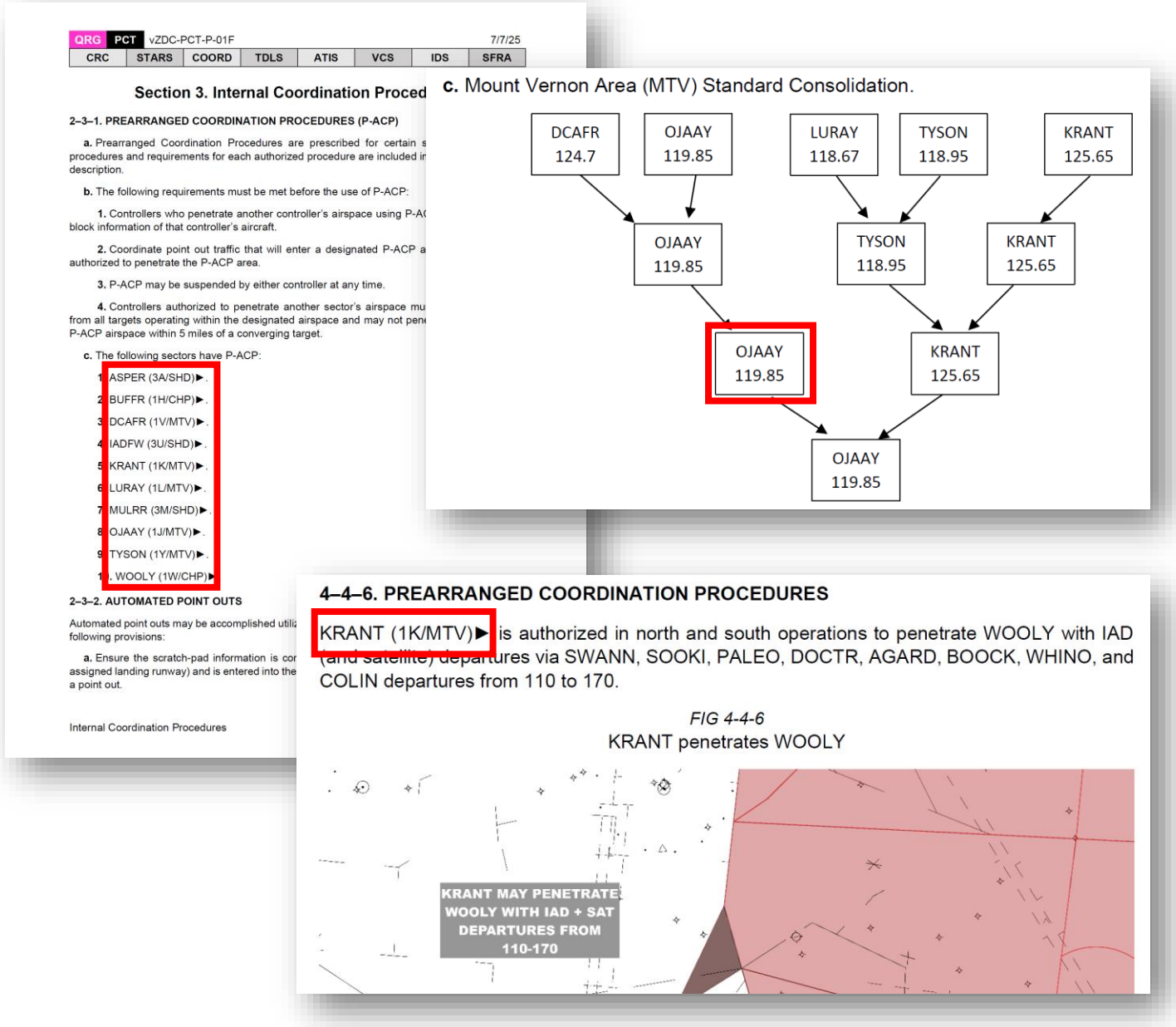
Section 1. QRG Directory

Departure Scratchpads	Arrival Scratchpads	Departure Flow Aids	Arrival Flow Aids	Prearranged Coordination	Area Procedures
CHP by Scratchpad	Approach Type Prefix	CHP – East	CHP – East	ASPER w/ IADFW	CHP Departures
CHP by Procedure	Primary Runway ID	CHP – West	CHP – West	BUFFR w/ MULRR	CHP Arrivals
JRV by Scratchpad		JRV – North	JRV – North	DCAFR w/ KRANT	JRV Departures
JRV by Procedure		JRV – South	JRV – South	KRANT w/ BUFFR	JRV Arrivals
MTV by Scratchpad		MTV – North	MTV – North	KRANT w/ WOOLY	MTV Departures
MTV by Procedure		MTV – South	MTV – South	KRANT w/ TYSON	MTV Arrivals
SHD by Scratchpad		SHD – North	SHD – North	KRANT w/ OJAAY	SHD Departures
SHD by Procedure		SHD - South	SHD – South	TYSON w/ LURAY	SHD Arrivals
All Codes by Scratchpad		Departure Gates (PCT)		TYSON w/ KRANT	
All Codes by Procedure				TYSON w/ OJAAY	
				TYSON w/ DCAFR	

QRG Directory 165

Navigation | Hyperlinks

- Text that is not a part of the navigation structure is marked with ► to indicate hyperlinked text.
- Other areas that include linked content will be noted in context.
- Sectorization (consolidation/deconsolidation) charts are hyperlinked to their respective sector.



QRG PCT vZDC-PCT-P-01F 7/7/25

CRC | STARS | COORD | TDLS | ATIS | VCS | IDS | SFRA

Section 3. Internal Coordination Proced

2–3–1. PREARRANGED COORDINATION PROCEDURES (P-ACP)

a. Prearranged Coordination Procedures are prescribed for certain s procedures and requirements for each authorized procedure are included in description.

b. The following requirements must be met before the use of P-ACP:

1. Controllers who penetrate another controller's airspace using P-A block information of that controller's aircraft.

2. Coordinate point out traffic that will enter a designated P-ACP a authorized to penetrate the P-ACP area.

3. P-ACP may be suspended by either controller at any time.

4. Controllers authorized to penetrate another sector's airspace mu from all targets operating within the designated airspace and may not pene P-ACP airspace within 5 miles of a converging target.

c. The following sectors have P-ACP:

1. ASPER (3A/SHD)►.
2. BUFFR (1H/CHP)►.
3. DCAFR (1V/MTV)►.
4. IADFW (3U/SHD)►.
5. KRANT (1K/MTV)►.
6. LURAY (1L/MTV)►.
7. MULRR (3M/SHD)►.
8. OJAAY (1J/MTV)►.
9. TYSON (1Y/MTV)►.
10. WOOLY (1W/CHP)►

2–3–2. AUTOMATED POINT OUTS

Automated point outs may be accomplished utili following provisions:

a. Ensure the scratch-pad information is cor assigned landing runway) and is entered into the a point out.

Internal Coordination Procedures

c. Mount Vernon Area (MTV) Standard Consolidation.

DCAFR 124.7 | OJAAY 119.85 | LURAY 118.67 | TYSON 118.95 | KRANT 125.65

OJAAY 119.85 | TYSON 118.95 | KRANT 125.65

OJAAY 119.85 | KRANT 125.65

OJAAY 119.85

4–4–6. PREARRANGED COORDINATION PROCEDURES

KRANT (1K/MTV)► is authorized in north and south operations to penetrate WOOLY with IAD (and satellite) departures via SWANN, SOOKI, PALEO, DOCTR, AGARD, BOOCK, WHINO, and COLIN departures from 110 to 170.

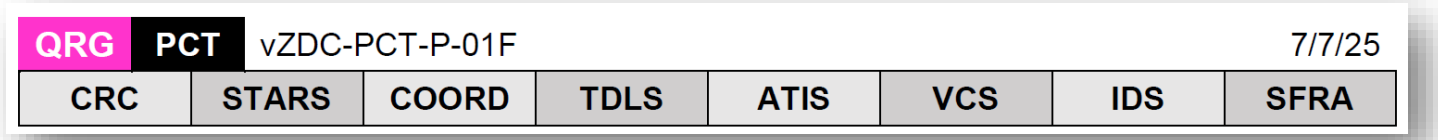
FIG 4-4-6

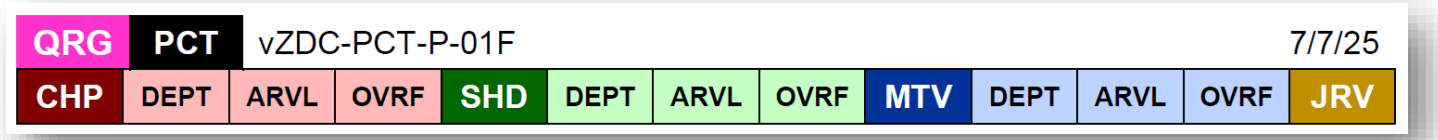
KRANT penetrates WOOLY

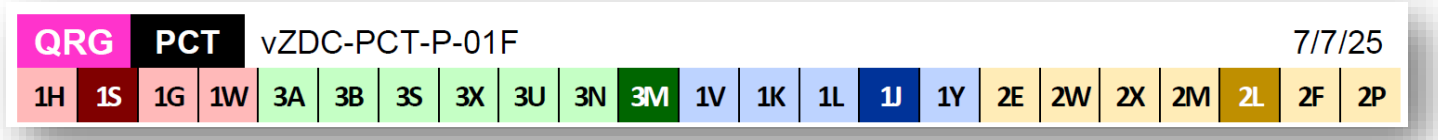
KRANT MAY PENETRATE WOOLY WITH IAD + SAT DEPARTURES FROM 110-170

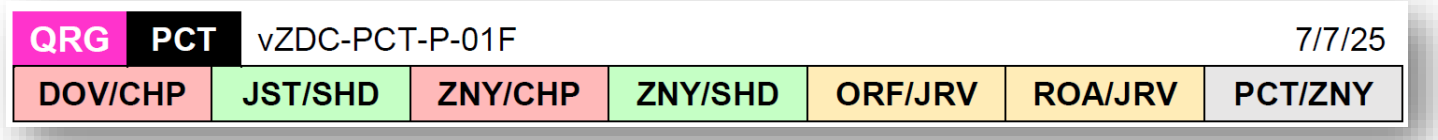
Navigation | Quick Access

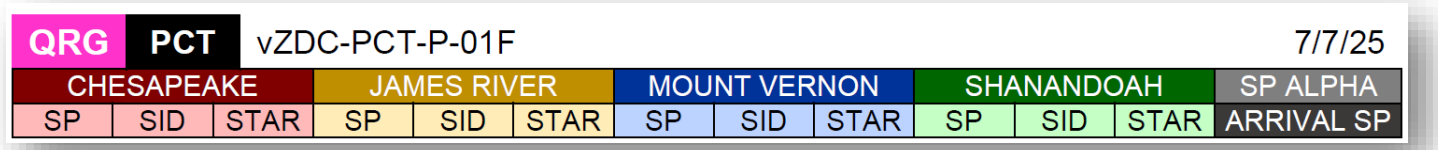
- Each section has its own header that provides quick access navigation to elements of that section.
- The goal is to never be more than 2 clicks away from an answer!
- QRG and PCT links are included at the top left of all SOP pages and will always take you immediately to the Front Page Directory or Quick Reference Guide.











Organizational Philosophy

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- Content Categorization
  - General Policy vs. Operational
    - Policy that is generic to the operation is included in Ch 1 and 2. This is information that applies to every position, regardless of what sector(s) are being worked.
    - Ch 5 incorporates LOA or LOA-like information into PCT procedure.
- Sector Policy
  - Combined Area vs. Deconsolidated Sectors
    - Ch 3 is grouped to help make routine combined area operations simpler. Providing quick reference to area specific ops based on type of operation (departure, arrival, overflight).
    - Ch 4 is induvial sector procedures and expands Ch 3 procedures to the sector level.
- Quick Reference
  - Used regularly and while working position
    - Ch 6 is the Quick Reference Guide and contains scratchpad information, flows, and references.
- Color Indicator
  - Content associated with an area is colored consistently to help quickly identify what sector/area the element is connected to.

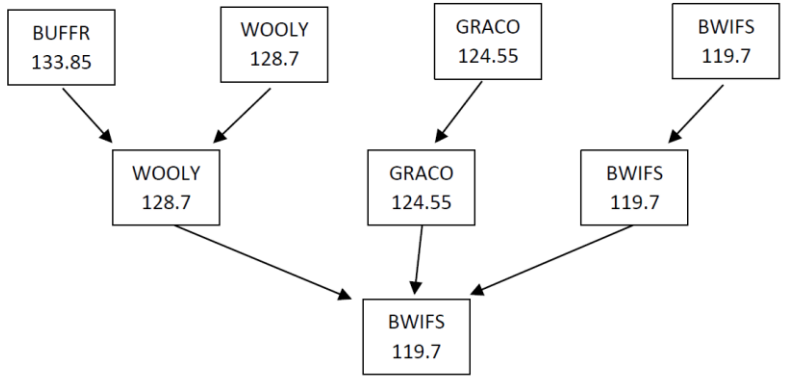
CHESAPEAKE			JAMES RIVER			MOUNT VERNON			SHANANDOAH		
SP	SID	STAR	SP	SID	STAR	SP	SID	STAR	SP	SID	STAR

Sectorization Plan Changes

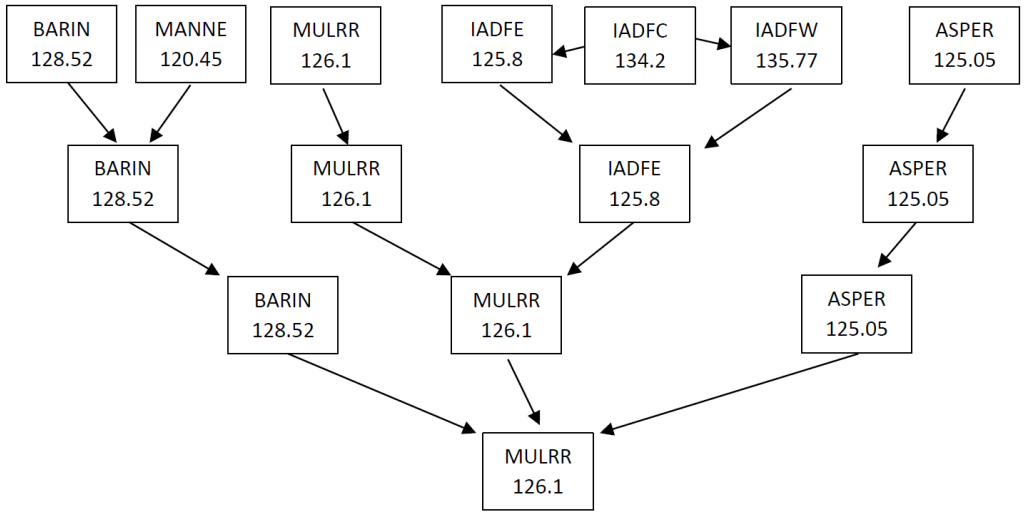
ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON D C

- 3 of 4 PCT Areas are designated as Tier 1. More than 97% of operations at PCT occur between BWI, DCA, IAD, RIC, and ADW. For this reason, the real world PCT sectorization plan has been combined slightly, resulting in some RW sectors *not* being defined.
- In these instances, the airspace has been incorporated with other sectors of that area. This improves our ability to effectively train our controllers to work the traffic we have while removing the burden and complexities of operations its likely a controller would never encounter.

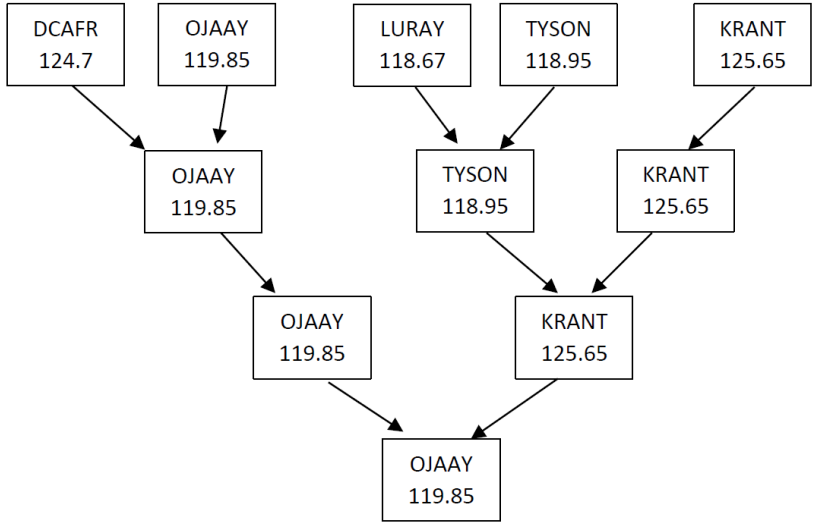
a. Chesapeake Area (CHP) Standard Consolidation.



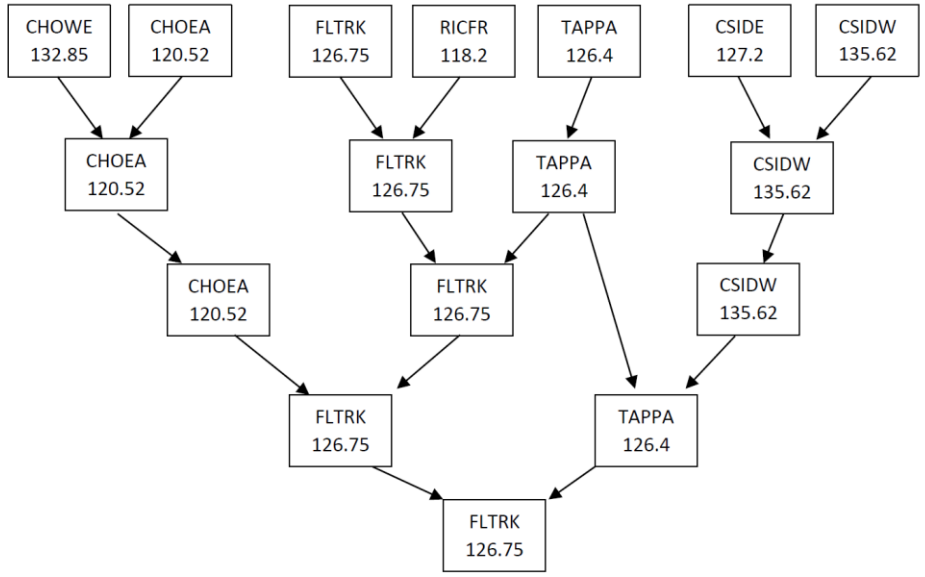
d. Shenandoah Area (SHD) Standard Consolidation.



c. Mount Vernon Area (MTV) Standard Consolidation.



b. James River Area (JRV) Standard Consolidation.



Consolidation and Deconsolidation

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- Deconsolidation from the standard combined area configuration is no longer restricted to events only. This means controllers ***may*** deconsolidate sectors within the area. ***However,*** deconsolidation must be done in accordance with the deconsolidation charts in the SOP which define how an area will be split.

- James River is ***not*** a Tier 1 facility and therefore does not require an endorsement. JRV may be staffed by any S3 controller without any additional endorsement for PCT.

- Controllers are encouraged to begin working JRV after completing their S3 at RDU and before they begin training for Tier 1 endorsement. By working JRV controllers will begin learning the airspace and will be able to start working with the PCT SOP which will make transitioning to CHP/MTV/SHD a smoother process.

Use of Autotrack

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- The departure controller ***will*** utilize `.autotrack` for all airports they are providing departure control services to.
- During events where more than one departure position may be staffed, the controller with the dominant flow of traffic will keep autotrack and flash any departure they will not work to the secondary departure controller. Controllers utilizing a secondary display should ensure that autotrack is enabled in the secondary display.
- *Note: This procedure is intended to keep continuity for planned upcoming vNAS/CRC/STARS changes. Until those changes are fully implemented, this is a "work around" solution and will make the transition later on seamless.*

Tower Assumed Radar Identification

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- Tower controllers must verify that the tag auto acquires *prior* to frequency change to departure. If the tag does not auto acquire, then the local controller must *first* notify the departure controller prior to frequency change.

- This procedure serves to satisfy the departure method of radar identification for a departure roll call, where in CRC there is no mechanism to either automate or make the verbal call efficient.

- All PCT ATCT's have a controller bulletin published directing this new requirement. Once the requirement is incorporated into the respective tower SOP the associated bulletin will be rescinded.

- **This is, procedurally, one of the biggest changes in day-to-day operations. Please work with your fellow controllers to ensure this change is practiced in regular operations!**

Frequency Management Standards

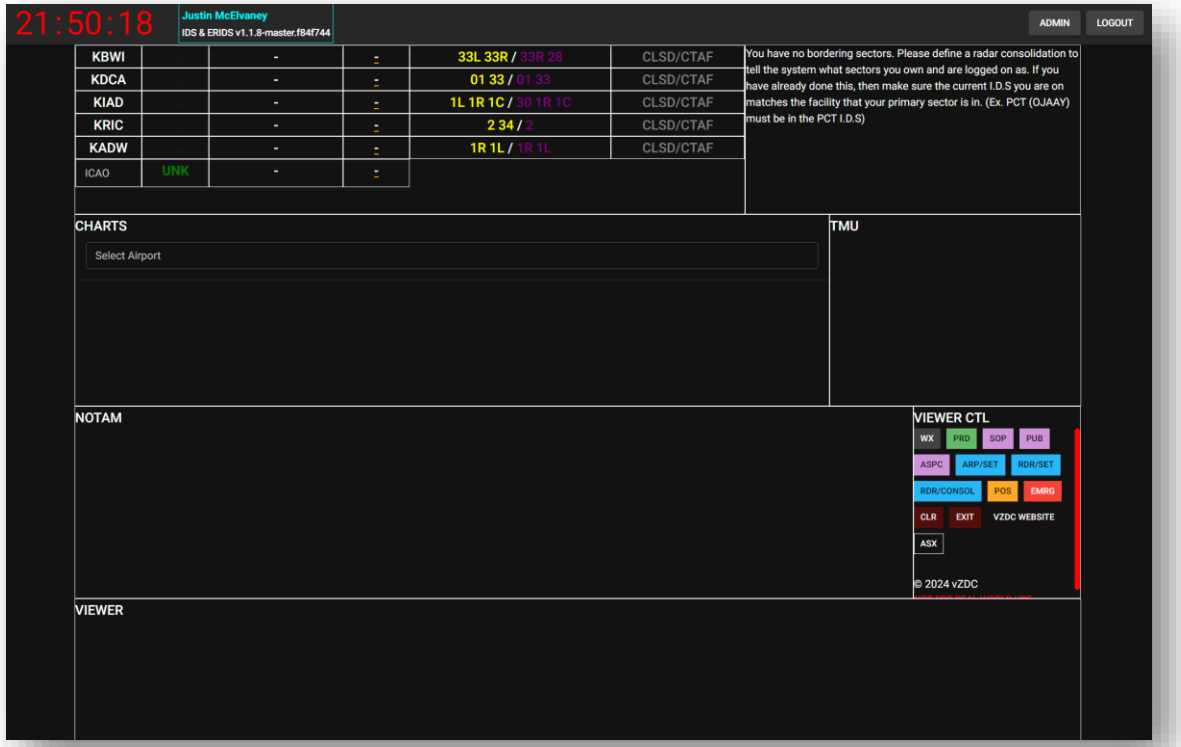
ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- Guidance is introduced that mirrors the ZDC SOP guidance for multiple frequency use.
- This procedure is intended to be used if it is known that a split will be occurring soon.
- Controllers will activate a secondary frequency and simulcast (TX/RX) on both primary and secondary frequency. Use of “CHANGE TO MY FREQUENCY ___” phraseology should be used to move aircraft to the frequency the aircraft will need to be on following the split.
- Use of this procedure will make the process of deconsolidating smooth since once the briefing is completed the controller simply needs to unkey the secondary frequency and all aircraft should be on the right frequency right away without the need for a mass frequency change of aircraft.

IDS Usage Requirement

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

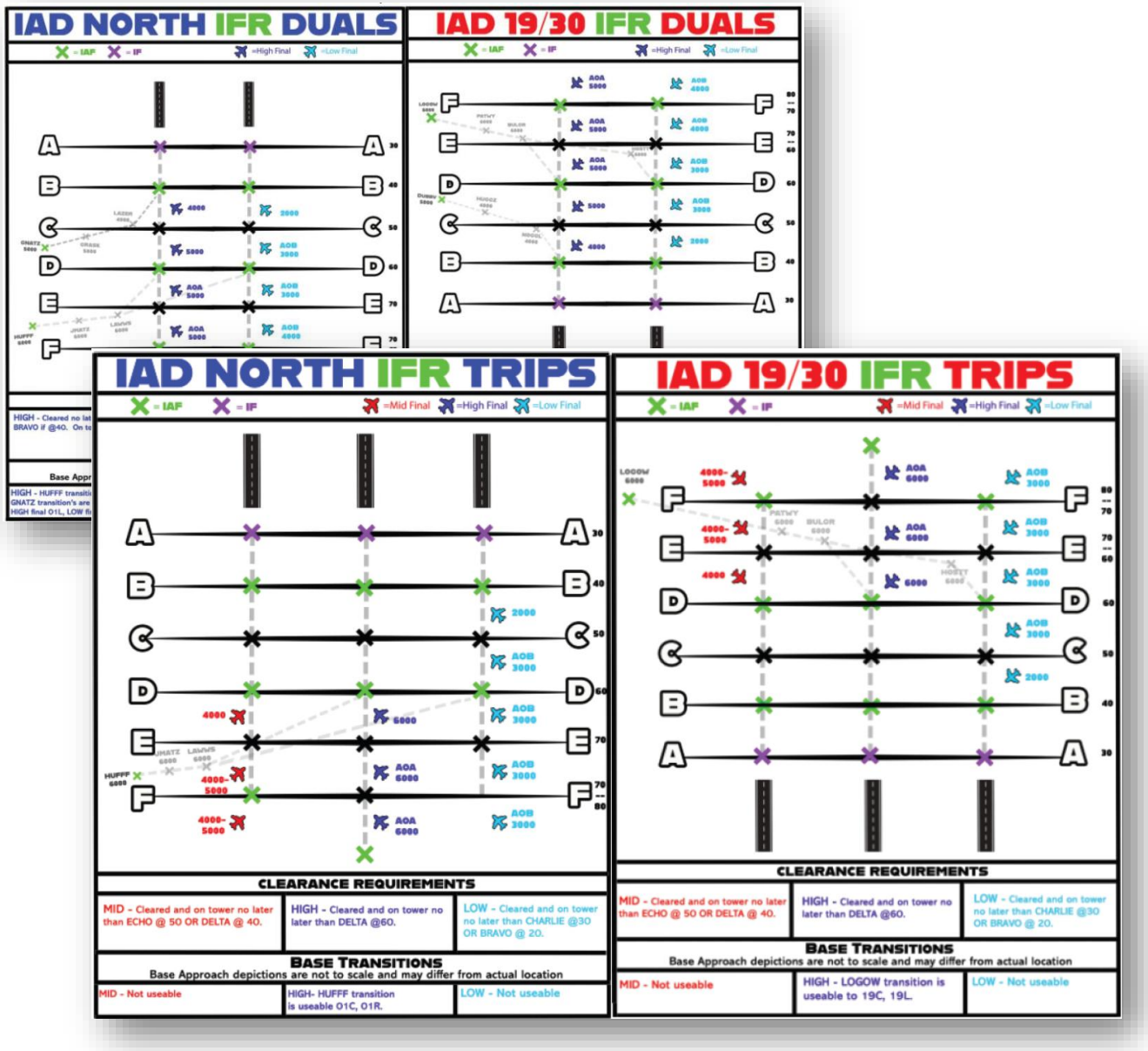
- Use of IDS is incorporated into the SOP.
- All controllers must ensure that the vZDC published vATIS file is in use to ensure IDS auto updating occurs.
- Airspace configuration (ASX) changes must be entered by controllers anytime a position is consolidated/deconsolidated.
- Controllers must monitor IDS while working. TMU restrictions when applicable will be disseminated via IDS



DUALS and TRIPS

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- Procedural guidance has been provided for running DUALS and TRIPS at IAD.
- For simultaneous ***independent*** approaches SHD must have one final position open to use DUALS and at least two final positions open to use TRIPS.
- Simultaneous ***dependent*** approaches may be used at any time.
- Updated visual aids will be published in the (near) future.



Prearranged Coordination (P-ACP)

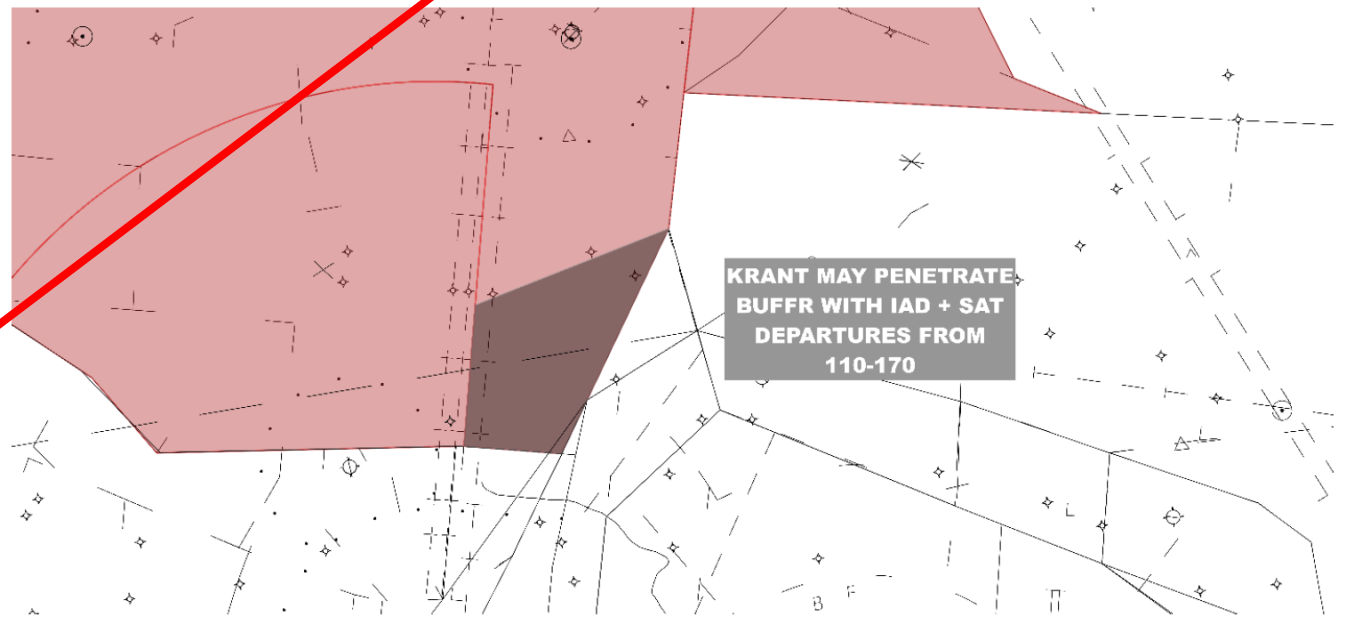
ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- P-ACP have been updated to reflect the PCT resectorization plan.
- Each sector maintains a complete P-ACP textual description and graphic for each authorized procedure.
- Sectors are hyperlinked to quickly access the paired procedure's sector

4–13–6. PREARRANGED COORDINATION PROCEDURES

a. KRANT is authorized to penetrate BUFFR (1H/CHP)► airspace with IAD (and satellite) SWANN, SOOKI, PALEO, DOCTR, AGARD, WHINO, and BOOCK departures from 110 to 170.

FIG 4-13-6a
KRANT penetrates BUFFR



ZDC/ZNY Closed Procedures

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- The ZDC/ZNY LOA established a mutual agreement for how PCT to ZNY and N90 to ZDC traffic can be handed off when the normal overlying facility (ZDC or ZNY respectively) is closed.
- Put simply, PCT will climb to the normal “top” altitude and leave on the cleared routing as if it were being handed off to ZDC, but instead the handoff will be directed to ZNY.

5–7–1. WASHINGTON ARTCC CLOSED PROCEDURES

When ZDC is closed, ZNY may handoff directly to any PCT position that would otherwise have received a handoff from ZDC or other PCT area. Aircraft may be given descend via clearance or 10,000 as appropriate. PCT may handoff departures departing the PCT terminal area to the north or east to ZNY and will assign the appropriate top altitude. ZNY shall have control for turn and climb.

REFERENCE –
ZNY/ZDC Letter of Agreement, para 8b.

Scratchpad Changes

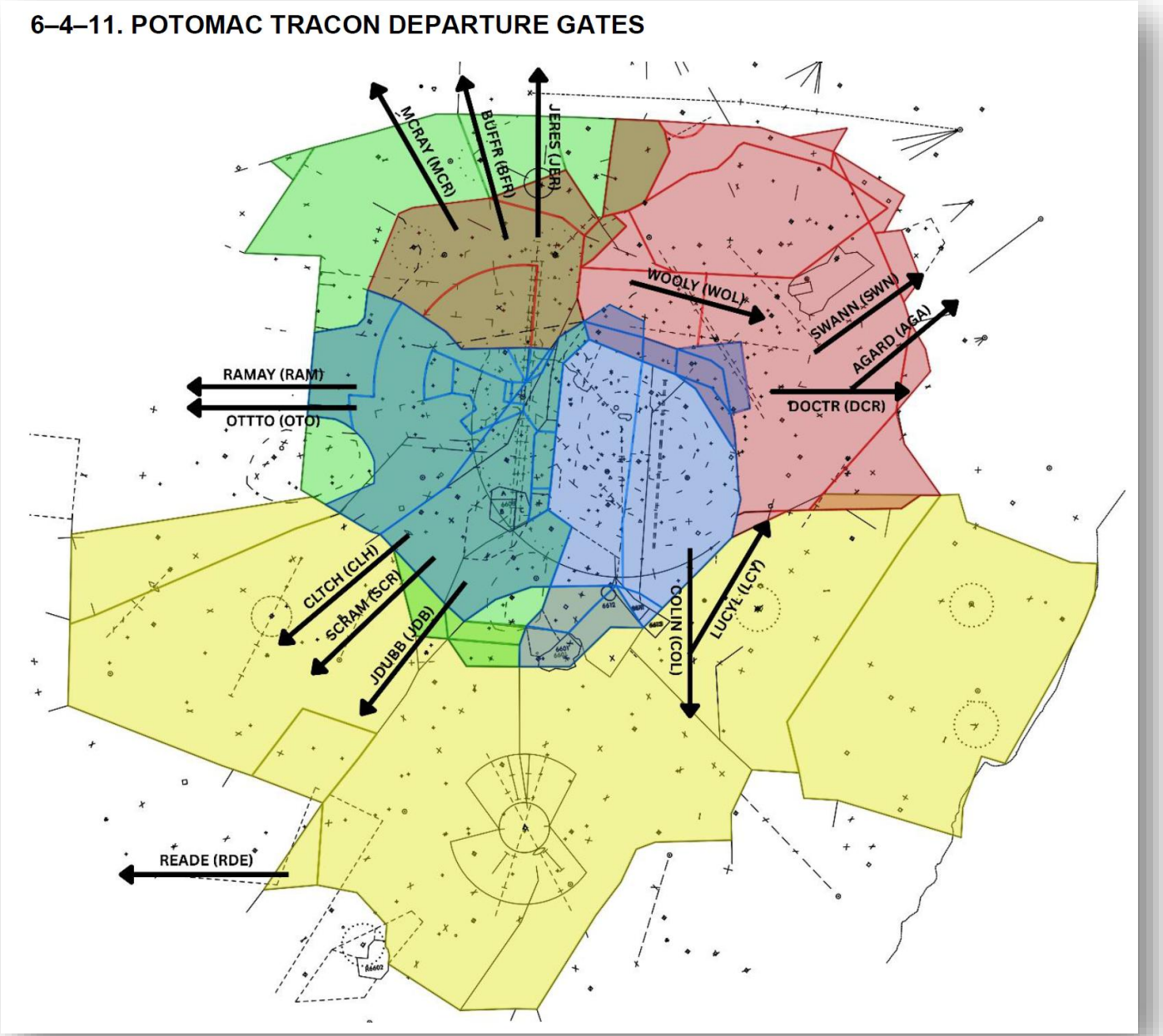
ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- Departure aircraft will display modified scratchpads based on their PCT Departure Gate.
- Previously, PCT departure scratchpads would populate with either the departure gate, the SID, a route element, or some combination of those elements.
- Now, PCT departing aircraft will populate with the departure gate in scratchpad 1. Certain departures that share common routing or departure gates will still show the gate in scratchpad 1 but will also show the SID in scratchpad 2 (+).
- The quick reference guide includes a comprehensive listing of departure scratchpads that sorts by scratchpad, by procedure, by area, and as a full PCT wide compilation so you can also quickly find a reference if needed.

Scratchpad Changes – Departure Gates

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- The QRG includes a quick reference graphic to help understand the core departure gates and their associated scratchpad.
- Departure controllers' goal is merging/blending the departures from all PCT airports into a sequenced stream through each gate.



Scratchpad Changes - Arrivals

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- Arrival aircraft to **primary** airports (BWI, DCA, IAD, RIC) will have their approach assignment and runway entered into Scratchpad 1 (Y-Scratchpad).
- Scratchpad 1 may be entered as an implied command by simply typing the 3-characters and then slewing on the target symbol.
- The QRG has an Arrival Scratchpad (Arrival SP) reference page to quickly identify how to code the approach type.
- Basic approach format is single character approach type followed by two-character runway.
- ***Note**: If an aircraft is instructed to follow another aircraft on a visual approach, then the scratchpad must be updated to Txx istead of Vxx*

Section 3. Arrival Scratch Pads

6–3–1. APPROACH TYPE PREFIX CODE

Approach Type	Prefix
ILS	I
RNAV X	X
RNAV Y	Y
RNAV Z	Z
RNAV (GPS)	G
VOR/TACAN	U
Localizer	L
Visual (airport in sight)	V
Visual (traffic in sight, entered after clearance given)	T
River Visual (CVFP) Runway 19	RIV (no runway entered)
Mount Vernon (CVFP) Runway 01	MTV (no runway entered)
LDA Y Runway 19 (DCA)	LDY (no runway entered)
LDA Z Runway 19 (DCA)	LDZ (no runway entered)
VFR arrival with runway assignment	F

6–3–2. PRIMARY AIRPORTS RUNWAY ID

Airport	Runway	ID
BWI	**10**	**10**
	15L	5L
	15R	5R
	28	28
	33L	**3L**
	33R	3R
DCA	**1**	**01**
	4	04
	15	15
	19	**19**
	22	22
	33	33
IAD	**1C**	**1C**
	1L	1L
	1R	**1R**
	12	12
	19C	**9C**
	19L	**9L**
	19R	9R
	30	30
RIC	2	02
	16	**16**
	20	20
	34	**34**

Example Scratchpad Entries

DCA River Visual Runway 19: `RIV`

BWI ILS Runway 33L: `I3L`

IAD Visual Approach Runway 1C: `V1C`. When cleared to follow traffic, `T1C`.

ADW ILS Runway 1L: Scratchpad 1 remains "ADW" and Scratchpad 2 entry "`I9L`" is made. (+I9L <slew>)

HEF RNAV (GPS) Runway 34L: Scratchpad 1 remains "HEF" and Scratchpad 2 entry "`G4L`" is made.

NOTE –
Bold indicates a primary arrival runway

Scratchpad Changes - Arrivals

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- Arrival aircraft to **secondary** airports (those airports that are *not* BWI, DCA, IAD, RIC) will have their approach and runway information entered in Scratchpad 2 (Y+). The arrival airport identifier will remain in scratchpad 1.

- To enter information in scratchpad 2 type “+” followed by the 3-character approach/runway information then slew on the target symbol.

2–2–2. SCRATCHPAD PROCEDURES

Arriving aircraft to PCT will automatically have the arrival airport identifier populated in Scratchpad 1 (“Y Scratchpad” or “primary scratchpad.”) Controllers will make the appropriate scratchpad entry once the approach and runway assignment has been given to the pilot. Refer to the QRG Scratchpad Section for the table of approach and runway identifier codes.

a. Primary Airport Scratchpad (BWI, DCA, IAD, RIC). After informing the pilot of the approach and runway to expect, enter into *Scratchpad 1* the approach identifier followed by the runway ID; this will overwrite the airport identifier that is initially populated.

b. Secondary Airport Scratchpad (All other PCT airports). After informing the pilot of the approach and runway, if applicable, to expect, enter into *Scratchpad 2* the approach identifier followed by the runway ID. Scratchpad 1 will continue to display the arrival airport ID and the field will timeshare with Scratchpad 2 (indicated in the datablock via “+” symbol).

NOTE –
Scratchpad 1 is entered as an implied command by typing 3 characters and slewing on the track. Scratchpad 2 is entered as an implied command by typing + followed by 3 characters and slewing on the track.

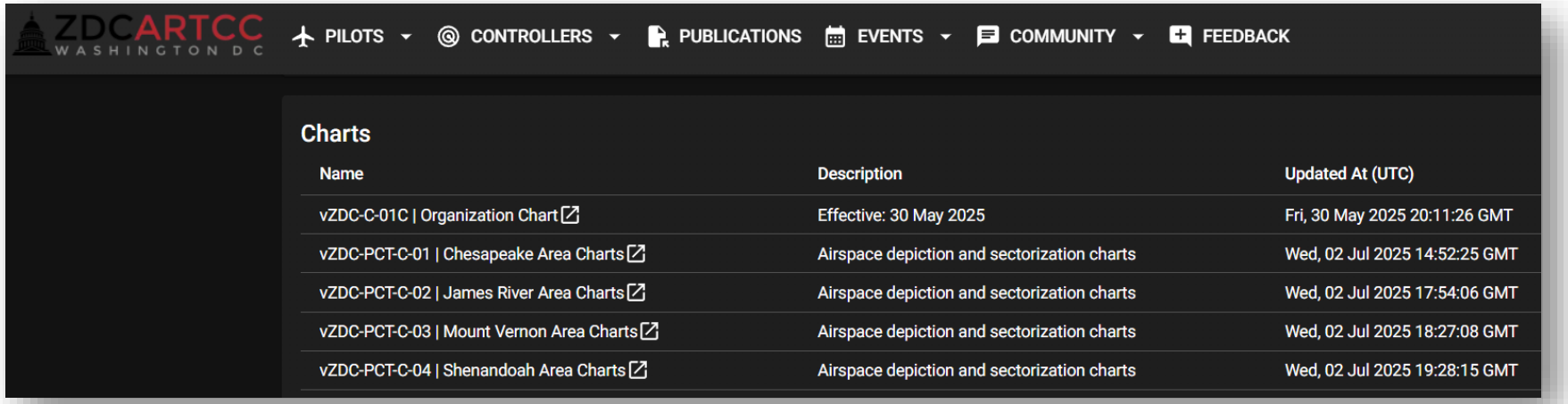
REFERENCE –
vZDC-PCT-P-01F, Chapter 6.Section 3, Arrival Scratchpads.

Scratchpad Standardization

ZDCARTCC WASHINGTON DC

- Scratchpad requirements must be completed by all PCT controlllers.
- ATPA will utilize scratchpad information and is therefore necessary to be entered correctly.
- As a technique, controllers are encouraged to enter the runway/approach assignment scratchpad once it is made to the pilot and after the pilot has confirmed they have current airport information (i.e. ATIS).

Area Chart Packages



- In an effort to keep the total file size of the updated PCT SOP to a more manageable size, image quality on certain charts is reduced.
- High resolution images are grouped by area and have been posted in the charts section of the vzdc.org Publications page.
- As a reminder, asx.vzdc.org also contains an interactive tool to better understand and study sectorization and airspace in general.

Feedback

- As with any significant publication revision, errors are anticipated.

- Submit feedback via the Publications Feedback tool at vzdc.org (click your name in the top right then select “Profile” and the link for pubs feedback is in the quick links list.