

7/1/2020

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

2020-56/8-10

1741276

To: Airport Manager, Kennedy Intl, (JFK), NY, FAA (ATM JFK ATCT)  
Info: FAA (AAS-1, AAS-300, AVP-1, AVP-200, AJI-144, AJV-5, AEA-600, AFS-280, AFS-200, Director of Air Traffic Operations ESA North), A4A, AAAE, ALPA, AOPA, APA, ASAP, CAPA, ATSAP, ATSG, IATA, IBT, ICAO, ICASS, IFALPA, IPA, NATCA, NBAA, NTSB, RAA  
From: Becky L. Hooey, Director  
NASA Aviation Safety Reporting System  
Re: JFK South Shore Route Not Charted

We recently received an ASRS report describing a safety concern that may involve your area of operational responsibility. We do not have sufficient details to assess either the factual accuracy or possible gravity of the report. It is our policy to relay the reported information to the appropriate authority for evaluation and any necessary follow-up. We feel you should be aware of the enclosed deidentified report.

To properly assess the usefulness of our alert message service, we would appreciate it if you would take the time to give us your feedback on the value of the information that we have provided. Please contact Dr. Becky Hooey at (408) 541-2854 or email at [becky.l.hooey@nasa.gov](mailto:becky.l.hooey@nasa.gov).



Aviation Safety Reporting System  
P.O. Box 189 | Moffett Field, CA | 94035-0189



ACN: 1741276

#### Time

Date: 202004

Local Time Of Day: 0601-1200

#### Place

Locale Reference.Airport: JFK.Airport

State Reference: NY

Altitude.MSL.Single Value: 1400

#### Environment

Flight Conditions: VMC

#### Aircraft 1

ATC / Advisory.TRACON: N90

Make Model Name: Small Aircraft, High Wing, 1 Eng, Fixed Gear

#### Person 1

Function.Flight Crew: Single Pilot

ASRS Report Number: 1741276

#### Events

Anomaly.Airspace Violation: All Types

Anomaly.ATC Issue: All Types

Anomaly.Deviation - Altitude: Overshoot

Anomaly.Deviation - Procedural: Published Material / Policy

Anomaly.Deviation - Procedural: Clearance

Detector.Person: Flight Crew

Result.Flight Crew: Became Reoriented

Result.Flight Crew: Requested ATC Assistance / Clarification

#### Narrative 1

Before takeoff at JFK I requested a clearance along the Skyline Route northbound after departure. I was cleared for a downwind departure. After flying an extended downwind I asked if Tower wanted me to continue to fly further on the same course. Tower instructed me to follow the "South Shore Route" or something that sounded like that. I could not find any "Shore" Route on the VFR charts, including the NY TAC, the Hudson SFRA chart, or the Skyline Route chart. To clarify, I told Tower that I would follow the coastline. Tower asked me to maintain at or below 1,400 feet, which would soon put me outside the 8 mile. Class B ring from JFK, and under a 1,500 foot Class B shelf.

While I was satisfied that JFK wanted me to follow the coast, I continued looking through charts to find a "Shore" or "Shoreline" Route in case it included any special routing, but I didn't find it. During that time, JFK Tower switched me over to EWR Tower, and at around that point I realized that I had drifted up to almost 1,600 MSL while looking through charts, and I corrected my altitude immediately. I still had my unique squawk code and believed I still had a Class B clearance, but since JFK Tower had asked me to maintain 1,400 feet, I wasn't sure whether they intended that I exit Class B and get a new clearance back in. Once I spoke to EWR Tower and made my request to transition the Skyline Route, EWR Tower cleared me into Class B again, so it became further unclear to me whether I had retained my Class B clearance after leaving the 8 mile Class B ring from JFK, and whether that meant that I had reentered Class B without authorization. I think that I still had a clearance, however, because Tower knew my

intentions to continue along the Skyline Route, which is in Class B, and they had kept me on my squawk code.

After the flight, I found that there is a South Shore route published on the NY Helicopter Chart, which I wouldn't have had with me in an airplane and wouldn't have consulted as part of my preflight briefing. During the flight, I had judged that my clarifying read back that I would follow the coastline was sufficiently clear to confirm my understanding. But I ended up hunting through charts in complex part of the airspace that I'm not very familiar with to be double certain, and that caused me to get distracted enough to climb almost 200 feet above my assigned altitude and back into Class B (if JFK meant to cancel my class B clearance one I departed the 8 mi. ring).

In hindsight, I could have told JFK Tower that I was unfamiliar with the South Shore Route instead of just confirming that I would follow the coastline. This could have prompted JFK Tower to Issue a clearance in different words, which may have avoided my searching around in my charts for "Shore" route. After all, searching for the route and flipping through charts is what caused my distraction that resulted in my climb.

Additionally, I realized later that various Towers around NYC have referred to locations that are charted on helicopter charts, but not on the charts intended for airplane pilots. The South Shore Route is one example. Another example is LGA Tower clearing me over the Throgs Neck Bridge (I know this bridge because I live locally, but I see that it's charted on the Helicopter Chart, but not on the other VFR charts). There seem to be several visual checkpoints (and routes) that are used by New York ATC in communicating with airplanes that may be are only charted for helicopters, or perhaps are only known by locals. While this may be common practice in less complex Class D airspace, it would be beneficial to survey NYC area towers (and other towers in complex airspace) to identify visual checkpoints and routes assigned to VFR airplanes that may be lacking at least on terminal charts or appropriate supplements. The purpose would be to avoid distraction and confusion and to reduce radio transmissions and potential deviations for airplanes transitioning VFR. Airplane pilots would also be able to familiarize themselves with these heretofore uncharted visual checkpoints pursuant to 91.103.

One more thought is that there may be confusion in the pilot population about when a Class B clearance ends. I tried to look this up and asked two other CFIs, and I got differing opinions, but the majority agreed that I had retained my Class B clearance because I remained on the squawk code and because JFK Tower had my request to transition still inside Class B, regardless of whether EWR Tower told me again that I was cleared to enter Class B. Under normal circumstances, when an aircraft exits Class B airspace, its heading and the pilot's intention are to continue further from Class B airspace. Normally the Controller therefore does not verbally terminate the Class B clearance. But in my circumstance, when I already had a Class B clearance and was within Class B but would transition a gap between Class B regions, it would be a good practice for ATC to indicate whether or not the Class B clearance is retained, or for the FAA to clarify that the Class B clearance is retained by default in this circumstance.

It would also have been good practice on my part to confirm whether I retained my Class B clearance when JFK Tower assigned me the at-or-below 1,400 foot altitude limitation, which would put me under the Class B for a few miles.

## **Synopsis**

General Aviation fixed wing aircraft pilot reported ATC assigned him VFR routes which were designated Helicopter routes, so they were not contained in his charts. The pilot also reported temporarily climbing above the VFR ATC assigned altitude and was not sure if they violated Class B airspace due to unclear ATC instruction.