



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
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OPNAVINST 3120.35K  
N96  
22 June 2012

OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3120.35K

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: REQUIREMENTS FOR AIR CAPABLE AND AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT  
SHIPS TO OPERATE AIRCRAFT

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 3120.28C  
(b) NAVAIRINST 3120.1C

Encl: (1) Aviation Operational Requirements for Air Capable  
Ships  
(2) Aviation Operational Requirements for LHA and LHD  
Ships  
(3) Acronyms List for Enclosures (1) and (2)

1. Purpose. To define the level, class and type aviation facilities requirements for air capable and amphibious assault ships to operate specified aircraft. This instruction has been revised in its entirety to incorporate Fast Sea Frame FSF-1 Sea Fighter, High Speed Vessel HSV-2 Swift, littoral combat ship (LCS) classes, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) maritime security cutter, large (WMSL) class, MQ-8B Firescout vertical takeoff un-manned air vehicle (VTUAV) and reflect changes in air capable and amphibious assault ships.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 3120.35J.

3. Discussion

a. The aviation facilities requirements updated by this instruction cover the full spectrum of aviation operations from the launch and recovery to personnel and stores transfer. To ensure safe aircraft operations, all afloat aviation facilities are to be certified.

b. The variety of ship configurations which occur as a result of the unique mission requirements complicates the problem of standardization in the fleet. Reference (a) establishes the requirements for formalized ship certification

which ensures the maintenance of proper standards for afloat aviation facilities and defines the basis of the certification program. Reference (b) outlines responsibilities for certification and inspection of aviation facilities in naval ships operating aircraft.

c. The certification of an afloat aviation facility does not constitute an authorization to conduct air operations. Authorization to operate aircraft aboard ships is the responsibility of fleet commanders, Commander, Military Sealift Command, or Commander, Naval Research as applicable.

4. Action. All air capable and amphibious assault ships shall be certified per reference (a) to operate with specified aircraft according to the levels, classes, and types of aviation facilities defined in enclosures (1) and (2). Enclosure (3) defines the acronyms cited in enclosures (1) and (2).

5. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, shall be managed per Secretary of the Navy Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.



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AVIATION OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR AIR CAPABLE SHIPS

AIR CAPABLE SHIPS/CLASSES		LEVEL	CLASS	TYPE	U.S. NAVY, MARINE CORPS, COAST GUARD, ARMY AND AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT (SEE NOTE 1 AND 2)																						
					USN/USMC		USN	USN	USMC		USN				USN/USMC	USCG		USA				USAF					
					H	H	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	V	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	V
					1	3	5	5	5	Q	4	6	6	6	6	6	2	6	6	1	6	4	5	6	6	1	5
SEE NOTES -->																											
AS 39 CLASS		III	4	2	X	X	X																				
			5	2				X						X											X		
CG 47 CLASS		I	1									X															
02 LEVEL AFT			2			X	X						X	X	X			X	X								
			2A						X								X	X		X	X		X		X		
			4	2	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X		
			6		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X					X		X		
MAIN DECK AFT		I	5	1	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		
		III	4	1	X	X	X	X		X												X	X				
		III	5	1						X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X					X	X		
DDG 51 CLASS (51-78)		I	2A		X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
MAIN DECK AFT			4	2		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
			6		X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X		X	X									
01 LEV FWD		III	4	1	X	X	X	X		X												X	X				
		III	5	1						X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X					X	X		
DDG 51 CLASS (79 AND FOLLOW ON)		I	1																								
MAIN DECK AFT			2			X	X				X			X	X	X		X	X								
			2A							X									X	X		X	X	X	X		
			4	2	X					X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X								
			4	SP2		X	X	X						X					X				X	X	X		
			6		X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X		X	X									
01 LEV FWD		III	4	1	X	X	X	X		X												X	X				
		III	5	1						X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X					X	X		
DDG 1000 CLASS		I	1							X																	
			2			X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X									
			2A							X									X	X		X	X	X	X		
			4	2	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
			6		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	X		

AVIATION OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR AIR CAPABLE SHIPS (continued)

AIR CAPABLE SHIPS/CLASSES	LEVEL	CLASS	TYPE	USM/USMC				USN		USMC		USN				USM/USMC	USCG		USA						USAF						
				H 1	H 3	H 5 3 D 3	H 5 3 E	H 5 7	M Q 8 B	H 4 6	H 6 6 0 A B/R	H 6 6 0 F H S	H 6 6 0 0 S	V 2 2 2	H 6 6 5	H 6 6 4	H 6 6 4	H 1 6 4 5 6 6	H 1 5 6 2	H 3 0 2											
SEE NOTES-->																															
FFG 7 CLASS LAMPS MK III CONFIG	MAIN DECK AFT	I	1																												
			2	X	X																										
			2A																												
			4	2	X																										
			4	SP2		X	X	X																							
			6		X	X	X	X																							
	MAIN DECK FWD	III	5	1	X	X																									
FSF-1 CLASS		III	3																												
			4	2	X	X																									
HSV-2 SWIFT	I	2		X																											
		2A																													
		4		X																											
IX 514 (HLT)	I	3		X	X																										
		4	2	X																											
		4	SP2		X	X	X																								
JHSV CLASS	I	2		X		X	X																								
		4	2	X																											
		4	SP2			X	X																								
LCC 19 CLASS	I	2A		X	X	X																									
		4	2	X	X	X	X																								
LCS-1 CLASS	I	1																													
		2		X	X																										
		2A																													
		4	2	X																											
LCS-2 CLASS	I	1																													
		2		X	X																										
		2A																													
		4	2	X	X	X	X																								
LPD 4 CLASS (SEE NOTE 5)	I	1		X		X																									
		2			X	X																									
		2A																													
		4	2	X	X	X	X																								
LPD 17 CLASS (SEE NOTE 5)	I	1		X		X	X																								
		2			X																										
		2A																													
		4	2	X	X	X	X																								
LSD 41 CLASS	I	2A		X	X	X	X																								
		4	2	X	X	X	X																								
T-AE 26 CLASS	I	1																													
		2		X	X																										
		2A																													
		4	2	X																											



AVIATION OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR AIR CAPABLE SHIPS (continued)

AIR CAPABLE SHIPS/CLASSES	LEVEL	CLASS	TYPE	USN/USMC				USN	USN	USMC		USN					USN/USMC	USCG		USA						USAF			
				H	H	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	V	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	V	
				1	3	5	5	5	Q	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	2	6	6	1	6	4	5	6	6	1	5	6	2
SEE NOTES -->																													
WAGB 400 CLASS HANGAR RETRACTED (WAGB 10-11)	II	1																											
		2A	X	X								X	X	X		X	X	X	X						X				
		4	2	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X		X		
WHEC 378 CLASS (715-726)	I	1																											
		2A																											
		5	2	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	X	X		
	6R			X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X											
	I	5	2																										
WMEC 39	I	1																											
		2		X								X	X	X		X													
		2A																											
		4	2	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X		X		
		6R			X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
WMEC 210 CLASS (WMEC 615-630)	II	2																											
		4	2	X						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X		X			
	III	6R			X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X											
WMEC 270 CLASS WITH HANGAR RETRACTED (WMEC 901-913)	I	1																											
		2		X																									
		2A											X	X	X		X									X			
		4	2	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X		X		
		6R			X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
WMSL 750 CLASS	I	1																											
		2		X	X					X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X											
		2A									X															X			
		4	2	X						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X		X		
		4	SP2		X	X	X																			X			

**NOTES:**

1. IN THE AIRCRAFT COLUMNS, AN "X" DENOTES A REQUIREMENT FOR THE LEVEL, AND CLASS, OF OPERATION SPECIFIED; THE NUMBERS 2 AND 3 REFER TO NOTES THAT CLARIFY HELICOPTER DESIGNATIONS; NUMBERS 4 AND ABOVE ALSO DENOTE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND REFER TO CLARIFYING NOTES; AND THE SHADED AREAS DENOTES NOT APPLICABLE.
2. FLIGHT DECK STRUCTURAL CERTIFICATION IS REQUIRED FOR EACH AIRCRAFT REQUIRED TO LAND ON A SHIP CLASS; PRIOR TO GRANTING A LANDING CERTIFICATION.
3. H53D APPLIES ONLY TO THOSE MODELS WITH A 72' 3" DIAMETER MAIN ROTOR SYSTEM, AND SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDES H53E HELICOPTERS WHICH HAVE A 79' 0" DIA MAIN ROTOR SYSTEM.
4. H60B/F/H/J/R HAVE A 15' 6" WHEELBASE; WHEREAS H60A/G/K/L/S HAVE A 23' 0" WHEELBASE WHICH REQUIRES SIGNIFICANTLY MORE DECK AREA TO ACCOMMODATE THE TAIL WHEEL.
5. LEVEL III, CLASS 3 OPERATION OF THE USMC AV8 AIRCRAFT IS ALSO REQUIRED ON LPD 4 CLASS, AND LPD 17 CLASS SHIPS.
6. V-22 REQUIRES A FLIGHT DECK THERMAL ANALYSIS PERFORMED IN ORDER TO LAND ON A SHIP CLASS.

AVIATION OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LHA AND LHD SHIPS

AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT SHIP CLASSES		LEVEL	CLASS	U.S. NAVY, MARINE CORPS, COAST GUARD, ARMY AND AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT (SEE NOTE 1)																										
				USMC		USN/USMC				USN	USN	USMC		USN				USN/USMC	USCG		USA						USAF			
				A	V	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	V	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	V
				8	1	3	5	5	5	7	Q	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	2	6	6	1	6	4	5	6	6	1	5	6
SEE NOTE -->																														
LHA 1 CLASS (SEE NOTE 3)	I	1	X	X		X	X			X					X	X														
		2				X											X	X											X	
		3									X								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
		4			X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	III	4			X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
LHD 1 CLASS (SEE NOTE 3)	I	1	X	X		X	X			X					X	X														
		2				X											X	X											X	
		3									X								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
		4			X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	III	4			X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

**NOTES:**

- IN THE AIRCRAFT COLUMNS, AN "X" DENOTES A REQUIREMENT FOR THE LEVEL AND CLASS OF OPERATIONS SPECIFIED; THE NUMBER 2 REFERS TO NOTE 2 WHICH CLARIFIES THE H53 AND H53E HELICOPTER OPERATIONS; AND A SHADED AREA DENOTES NOT APPLICABLE.
- H53 APPLIES ONLY TO THOSE MODELS WITH A 72' 3" DIAMETER MAIN ROTOR SYSTEM, AND SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDES H53E HELICOPTERS WHICH HAVE A 79' 0" DIAMETER MAIN ROTOR SYSTEM.
- THE LEVEL I, CLASS 4 REQUIREMENTS APPLY FORWARD AND AFT OF THE ISLAND ONLY. THE LEVEL III, CLASS 4 REQUIREMENTS APPLY ABEAM THE ISLAND ONLY.

ACRONYMS LIST FOR ENCLOSURES (1) AND (2)

Terms:

FWD	Forward
DK	Deck
MK	Mark

Ship Class:

AS	Submarine Tender Auxiliary
CG	Guided Missile Cruiser
DDG	Guided Missile Destroyer
FFG	Guided Missile Frigate
FSF	Fast Sea Frame
HSV	High Speed Vessel
IX	Unclassified Miscellaneous
JHSV	Joint High Speed Vessel
LCC	Amphibious Command Ship
LCS	Littoral Combat Ship
LPD	Amphibious Transport Dock Ship
LSD	Dock Landing Ship
T-AE	Military Sealift Command Ammunition Ship
T-AH	Military Sealift Command Hospital Ship
T-AK	Military Sealift Command Dry Cargo
T-AKR	Military Sealift Command Vehicle Cargo Ship
T-AKE	Military Sealift Command Dry Cargo/Ammunition
T-AO	Military Sealift Command Oiler
T-AOE	Military Sealift Command Fast Combat Support Ship
T-ARS	Military Sealift Command Salvage Ship
T-ATF	Military Sealift Command Fleet Ocean Tug
T-AVB	Military Sealift Command Aviation Logistics Support Ship
WAGB	Coast Guard Polar Class Ice Breaker
WHEC	Coast Guard High Endurance Cutter
WMEC	Coast Guard Medium Endurance Cutter
WMSL	Coast Guard Maritime Security Cutter Large
LHA	Amphibious Assault Ship, General Purpose
LHD	Amphibious Assault Ship, Multi-Purpose



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Aircraft Class:

H	Helicopter
MQ	Target/Drone Recoverable
V	Fixed Wing Aircraft