

VISUAL SEPARATION AND OPERATIONS TO PARALLEL RUNWAYS

The following information is taken from FAA Order 7110.65W (also known as the air traffic controller manual)

VISUAL SEPARATION

“Aircraft may be separated by visual means, when other approved separation is assured before and after the application of visual separation. To ensure that other separation will exist, the controller shall consider aircraft performance, wake turbulence, closure rate, routes of flight, and known weather conditions. Reported weather conditions must allow the aircraft to remain within sight until other separation exists. Do not apply visual separation between successive departures when departure routes and/or aircraft performance preclude maintaining separation. Visual separation is not authorized when the lead aircraft is a super”

Visual separation may be applied between aircraft up to but not including FL180 under the following conditions:

1. Tower-applied visual separation. (a) Maintain communication with at least one of the aircraft involved or ensure there is an ability to communicate immediately as prescribed in paragraph 3-9-3
2. The tower visually observes the aircraft, issues timely traffic advisories, and maintains visual separation between the aircraft. The use of tower-applied visual separation is not authorized when wake turbulence separation is required.

In order to use visual separation, the controller will:

Tell the pilot about the other aircraft including position, direction and, unless it is obvious, the other aircraft's intention.

Obtain acknowledgment from the pilot that the other aircraft is in sight.

Instruct the pilot to maintain visual separation from that aircraft.

If the pilot advises he/she has the traffic in sight and will maintain visual separation from it (the pilot must use that entire phrase)

APPROACHES TO PARALLEL RUNWAYS

Parallel runways separated by less than 2,500 feet. “Unless approved separation is provided by ATC, an aircraft must report sighting a preceding aircraft making an approach (instrument or visual) to the adjacent parallel runway. When an aircraft reports another aircraft in sight on the adjacent final

approach course and visual separation is applied, controllers must advise the succeeding aircraft to maintain visual separation. However, do not permit a Super or Heavy aircraft to overtake another aircraft. Do not permit a B757 or other large aircraft to overtake a small aircraft.”