

43 entries — every glossary entry under this letter, no curation. Reproduced verbatim from the Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge (FAA-H-8083-25C (July 2023)), Glossary.

DA

See decision altitude.

FAA definition of **Decision altitude (DA)**:

A specified altitude in the precision approach, charted in feet MSL, at which a missed approach must be initiated if the required visual reference to continue the approach has not been established.

Datum (Reference Datum)

An imaginary vertical plane or line from which all measurements of arm are taken. The datum is established by the manufacturer. Once the datum has been selected, all moment arms and the location of CG range are measured from this point. D.C. Direct current.

Dark adaptation

Physical and chemical adjustments of the eye that make vision possible in relative darkness.

Dead reckoning

Navigation of an airplane solely by means of computations based on airspeed, course, heading, wind direction and speed, groundspeed, and elapsed time.

Deceleration error

A magnetic compass error that occurs when the aircraft decelerates while flying on an easterly or westerly heading, causing the compass card to rotate toward South.

Decision altitude (DA)

A specified altitude in the precision approach, charted in feet MSL, at which a missed approach must be initiated if the required visual reference to continue the approach has not been established.

Decision height (DH)

A specified altitude in the precision approach, charted in height above threshold elevation, at which a decision must be made either to continue the approach or to execute a missed approach.

Deice

The act of removing ice accumulation from an aircraft structure.

Delta

A Greek letter expressed by the symbol Δ to indicate a change of values. As an example, Δ CG indicates a change (or movement) of the CG.

Density altitude

Pressure altitude corrected for nonstandard temperature. Density altitude is used in computing the performance of an aircraft and its engines.

Departure procedure (DP)

Preplanned IFR ATC departure, published for pilot use, in textual and graphic format.

Deposition

The direct transformation of a gas to a solid state, in which the liquid state is bypassed. Some sources use sublimation to describe this process instead of deposition.

Detonation

The sudden release of heat energy from fuel in an aircraft engine caused by the fuel-air mixture reaching its critical pressure and temperature. Detonation occurs as a violent explosion rather than a smooth burning process.

Deviation

A magnetic compass error caused by local magnetic fields within the aircraft. Deviation error is different on each heading.

Dew

Moisture that has condensed from water vapor. Usually found on cooler objects near the ground, such as grass, as the near-surface layer of air cools faster than the layers of air above it.

Dewpoint

The temperature at which air reaches a state where it can hold no more water.

DGPS

Differential global positioning system.

DH

See decision height.

FAA definition of **Decision height (DH)**:

A specified altitude in the precision approach, charted in height above threshold elevation, at which a decision must be made either to continue the approach or to execute a missed approach.

Differential ailerons

Control surface rigged such that the aileron moving up moves a greater distance than the aileron moving down. The up aileron produces extra parasite drag to compensate for the additional induced drag caused by the down aileron. This balancing of the drag forces helps minimize adverse yaw.

Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS)

A system that improves the accuracy of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) by measuring changes in variables to provide satellite positioning corrections.

Differential pressure

A difference between two pressures. The measurement of airspeed is an example of the use of differential pressure.

Dihedral

The positive acute angle between the lateral axis of an airplane and a line through the center of a wing or horizontal stabilizer. Dihedral contributes to the lateral stability of an airplane.

Diluter-demand oxygen system

An oxygen system that delivers oxygen mixed or diluted with air in order to maintain a constant oxygen partial pressure as the altitude changes.

Direct indication

The true and instantaneous reflection of aircraft pitch-and-bank attitude by the miniature aircraft, relative to the horizon bar of the attitude indicator.

Direct User Access Terminal System (DUATS)

A system that provides current FAA weather and flight plan filing services to certified civil pilots, via personal computer, modem, or telephone access to the system. Pilots can request specific types of weather briefings and other pertinent data for planned flights.

Directional stability

Stability about the vertical axis of an aircraft, whereby an aircraft tends to return, on its own, to flight aligned with the relative wind when disturbed from that equilibrium state. The vertical tail is the primary contributor to directional stability, causing an airplane in flight to align with the relative wind.

Distance circle

See reference circle.

FAA definition of **Reference circle (also, distance circle)**:

The circle depicted in the plan view of an IAP chart that typically has a 10 NM radius, within which chart elements are drawn to scale.

Distance measuring equipment (DME)

A pulse-type electronic navigation system that shows the pilot, by an instrument-panel indication, the number of nautical miles between the aircraft and a ground station or waypoint.

DME

See distance measuring equipment.

FAA definition of **Distance measuring equipment (DME)**:

A pulse-type electronic navigation system that shows the pilot, by an instrument-panel indication, the number of nautical miles between the aircraft and a ground station or waypoint.

DME arc

A flight track that is a constant distance from the station or waypoint.

DOD

Department of Defense.

Doghouse

A turn-and-slip indicator dial mark in the shape of a doghouse. Domestic Reduced Vertical Separation Minimum (DRVSM). Additional flight levels between FL 290 and FL 410 to provide operational, traffic, and airspace efficiency.

Double gimbal

A type of mount used for the gyro in an attitude instrument. The axes of the two gimbals are at right angles to the spin axis of the gyro, allowing free motion in two planes around the gyro.

DP

See departure procedure.

FAA definition of **Departure procedure (DP)**:

Preplanned IFR ATC departure, published for pilot use, in textual and graphic format.

Drag

The net aerodynamic force parallel to the relative wind, usually the sum of two components: induced drag and parasite drag.

Drag curve

The curve created when plotting induced drag and parasite drag.

Drift angle

Angle between heading and track.

DRVSM

See Domestic Reduced Vertical Separation Minimum.

DUATS

See direct user access terminal system.

FAA definition of **Direct User Access Terminal System (DUATS)**:

A system that provides current FAA weather and flight plan filing services to certified civil pilots, via personal computer, modem, or telephone access to the system. Pilots can request specific types of weather briefings and other pertinent data for planned flights.

Duplex

Transmitting on one frequency and receiving on a separate frequency.

Dutch roll

A combination of rolling and yawing oscillations that normally occurs when the dihedral effects of an aircraft are more powerful than the directional stability. Usually dynamically stable but objectionable in an airplane because of the oscillatory nature.

Dynamic hydroplaning

A condition that exists when landing on a surface with standing water deeper than the tread depth of the tires. When the brakes are applied, there is a possibility that the brake will lock up and the tire will ride on the surface of the water, much like a water ski. When the tires are hydroplaning, directional control and braking action are virtually impossible. An effective anti-skid system can minimize the effects of hydroplaning.

Dynamic stability

The property of an aircraft that causes it, when disturbed from straight-and-level flight, to develop forces or moments that restore the original condition of straight and level.