

UNCONTROLLED AIRPORTS



DEPARTING FROM AN UNCONTROLLED AIRPORT

Departing VFR

- On initial call to ATC, state call sign, current position, and request.
NOTE: Filing a VFR Flight Plan with Flight Service or via other electronic services is considered a Best Practice. Please be aware that ATC does not see these filed VFR Flight Plans and will need additional information during initial communication.
- Departing VFR, planning IFR Airborne
 - » ATC can not give an IFR clearance if the aircraft is below the Minimum Vectoring Altitude (MVA). If below the MVA, ATC will ask pilot if they can maintain their own terrain and obstruction avoidance to the MVA. If the pilot cannot, an IFR clearance cannot be given until the aircraft is at or above the MVA.

Departing IFR

- File your flight plan in advance for faster service. Receiving a “pop up” IFR clearance is not a guarantee.
- If you are not ready to depart within five minutes, expect a hold for release.
- When you depart IFR, the airport is closed for other IFR arrivals and departures until you are radar identified, so do not delay your departure.

ARRIVING AT AN UNCONTROLLED AIRPORT

Arriving VFR

- Pilots should have the current weather and NOTAMs for the destination airport.
 - » Ask ATC if you need updated weather or NOTAMs.
- Expect ATC to ask you to advise when the airport is in sight.
- When you advise the airport is in sight, expect ATC to say “Radar service terminated, squawk VFR, change to advisory frequency approved.”

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Arriving IFR

- Visual Approaches
 - » At airports without an operating control tower, aircraft executing a go-around are expected to complete a landing as soon as possible or contact ATC for further clearance. ATC must maintain separation from other IFR aircraft.
 - » ATC does not assign landing runway on visual approach clearances into uncontrolled airports.
- Instrument Approaches
 - » ATC cannot issue circling approach instructions to an airport without an operational control tower.
- Cancellation of IFR Flight Plans are a **MUST**. If you do not cancel your IFR flight plan, ATC will be required to contact local airport personnel or the local sheriff to confirm your safe arrival.

COMMUNICATION WITH ATC AT AN UNCONTROLLED AIRPORT

- Contact the overlying Approach Control/Center Frequency or the Ground ATC Frequency.
 - » The appropriate frequency is found in the chart supplement/AFD (Airport/Facility Directory).
- Ground Communication Outlet (GCO)
 - » GCO is direct communication to ATC or FSS from an uncontrolled airport by using VHF communications.
 - » The Chart Supplement will note if an airport has a GCO.
 - » The Chart Supplement will include backup Clearance Delivery phone numbers or airports with a GCO to use if the radio communications become unavailable.
 - » Pilots at uncontrolled airports may contact ATC and FSS to obtain an instrument clearance or close a VFR or IFR flight plan. They may also get an updated weather briefing prior to takeoff.
 - » When using VHF Communications, pilots will use four “key clicks” to contact the appropriate ATC facility or six “key clicks” to contact FSS.