

VFR FLIGHT FOLLOWING



- VFR Flight Following is a valuable option for a pilot flying VFR. There are many times when the controller prefers the traffic to be on the frequency. Pilots should know what the controllers need in order to keep the transmissions to a minimum.
- Every controller is different but there are some basic methods for radio calls that work for all. Pilots that are prepared make the system smoother and safer.
- Flight Following to VFR aircraft is dependent on controller workload, radio and radar coverage, and/or radar outages. The pilot will be advised when VFR services are limited or not available.
- Questions? Email AskATC@natca.org.

REQUESTING VFR FLIGHT FOLLOWING

- To receive flight following, or to transition controlled airspace, controllers expect to hear the following information on initial check-in:

1. Facility you are calling
2. Aircraft Identification
3. Your request (i.e. flight following, request to transition airspace, etc.)

NOTE: If you have a lot of information to give, get the attention of the controller first saying your callsign, then “request VFR Flight Following.”

- **Example of Communication with ATC:**

Pilot: “Columbia Approach, Cherokee 12345, request VFR Flight Following.”

ATC: “Cherokee 12345, Columbia Approach, squawk 0322, Columbia altimeter 2992.”

After the initial transmission, ATC will need additional information, including type aircraft and destination. ATC may also ask for location and altitude to ensure aircraft is in their airspace and have appropriate radar coverage. Once the pilot squawks the code, the controller will advise radar contact. The pilot should advise the controller of any changes in altitude or route.

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- Example of Communication with ATC, continued:

ATC: "Cherokee 12345, radar contact 5 miles east of Columbia VOR. Say type aircraft and destination."

Pilot: "Cherokee 12345, P28A/G, destination Myrtle Beach."

ATC: "Cherokee 12345, maintain VFR." If applicable, "Advise of any altitude changes."

Pilot: "Cherokee 12345, wilco."

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.

TRANSITIONING CONTROLLED AIRSPACE

- FAA Order 7110.65 2-1-16 SURFACE AREAS

- » **NOTE:** The pilot is not expected to obtain his/her own authorization through each area when in contact with a radar facility.
- » Controllers will coordinate with the appropriate ATC facility for authorization for the VFR aircraft to enter the other facility's airspace when they are providing radar traffic advisory services.
 - ◆ Pilots will be unaware of ATC coordination behind the scenes.

TERMINATING VFR FLIGHT FOLLOWING

- Pilots may request to terminate VFR Flight Following. ATC may deny the request while in controlled airspace to ensure positive separation.
- ATC will automatically terminate VFR Flight Following when the aircraft arrives at its destination.
- ATC may terminate VFR Flight Following due to workload, loss of radar coverage, or loss of radio communications.
 - » When ATC does not receive acknowledgment from the pilot, lost communication procedures are followed. ATC will track the flight until communications are reestablished and termination of flight following is confirmed or will contact the airport of intended landing to ensure a safe arrival.