

VFR-ON-TOP

VFR-on-Top applies to IFR aircraft only. It is a clearance that authorizes IFR aircraft to operate in VFR conditions at any appropriate VFR altitude as specified in 14 CFR and as restricted by ATC.

BENEFITS OF VFR-ON-TOP

- Permits a pilot to select an altitude of their choice (subject to any ATC restrictions.)
- Pilots can climb through a cloud, haze, smoke, or other meteorological formation and then fly in VFR conditions. Pilots may operate above, below, between layers, or in areas where there is no meteorological obscuration. This way pilots may avoid icing etc.
- Pilots operating VFR-on-Top will receive traffic information and safety alerts from ATC.
- A clearance to operate “VFR-on-Top/VFR conditions” does not cancel the IFR flight plan.
- Aircraft that fly VFR-on-Top allow ATC to use more altitudes, thereby accommodating more airplanes and making the airspace more efficient.

PILOT REQUIREMENTS

- Pilots must request VFR-on-Top! ATC is not allowed to solicit pilot participation.
- Pilots must fly at the appropriate VFR altitude as prescribed in 14 CFR Section 91.159. This means they fly at a cardinal altitude plus 500 feet. Pilots should advise ATC prior to any altitude change to ensure the exchange of accurate traffic information.
- Pilots must comply with the VFR visibility and distance from cloud criteria in 14 CFR Section 91.155 (Basic VFR Weather Minimums).
- Pilots must fly the routing cleared on unless coordinated with ATC.
- Pilots must comply with instrument flight rules that are applicable to this flight; i.e., minimum IFR altitudes, position reporting, radio communications, adherence to ATC clearance, etc.
- Pilots retain the responsibility to see and avoid other aircraft.



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Example of VFR-on-Top Clearance:

Pilot: "Seattle Center, N13452, request VFR-on-top."

Controller: "N13452 cleared to the Seattle airport as filed, climb to and report reaching VFR-on-Top, tops reported at five thousand. If not on top by five thousand, maintain five thousand and advise."

NOTE: In the event that traffic in the area may be a factor prior to you reaching VFR conditions on top, ATC will issue an alternative clearance to ensure separation.

