

Radio Communications

Uncontrolled Airports: At the uncontrolled airports, you don't have to worry about communicating with a control tower, but you will want to be more careful because you don't know who else is there. Just remember that, in the worst case, if you get flustered for some reason, that talking to the tower is just English, so just talk like you would to your friends if you are having any problems. Below is the outline for communications:

1. Airport Traffic You Are Flying At: Example: Stellar Airport Traffic
2. Who You Are: Cessna 12345
3. What You Are Going To Do or Where You Are: Departing runway 17, or 10 miles south
4. Airport Traffic You Are Flying At: Again announce the airport you are at—Stellar Traffic

It is a good idea to announce yourself as much as possible. For example, if you are in the traffic pattern, you would announce all legs of the pattern: Upwind, crosswind, downwind, base, and final.

Remember to listen very carefully. There may be other airports that have the same runways also.

Controlled Airports: At controlled airports, you will use the same format of talking, except you substitute what you are going to do with what you want.

1. Address the Tower: Falcon Tower
2. Who You Are: Cessna 12345
3. Where You Are: Holding short of runway 22, or 10 miles south
4. What You Want: Takeoff to the north, landing
5. On Your Initial Contact, Tell Them the ATIS Information You Have: This is one that a lot of people forget. If the frequency is busy, the controller will have to come back to you and give you the current weather, so make sure you mention the ATIS on your initial contact. After you have contacted the airport, you are not required to tell them the ATIS

information you have. If your initial contact is with ground and you tell them, you don't have to tell the tower when you switch frequencies.

Radio Communications with Class B and Class C Airspace: The airspace in Tucson is Class C. The radio communications will be a little bit different, but not that much. The communications in Class B airspace is the same. You will want to do the same thing you would do at Falcon Field, except now you will be handed off from controller to controller. The initial call is a little different because you need to let the controllers know what type of aircraft you have so they can sequence you into the airport you intend to land at

Initial Call: The initial call into Class B or Class C airspace is just your call sign. Once you call the controlling agency and state your call sign, the controller will come back and say one of three things:

1. Standby: This means exactly what it says. If the controller states your call sign, then you can expect to hear your call sign back. If they just say, "Aircraft calling standby," then listen for them to call you back by saying, "Aircraft told to stand by."

2. State Your Request: This time, you will tell the controller what kind of aircraft you are so they can properly sequence you into the desired airport.

3. Aircraft _____ SKWAWK Transponder Code: This is a simple way for the air traffic controller to find you while he or she is busy. Since you should have called them on the appropriate frequency, they will know the general area you are calling from.

Once you have contacted approach, they will tell you what runway to expect and will call out traffic for you. When you come close to the airspace of another controller, they will hand you off and tell you to contact someone else on a different frequency. At this time, all you do is repeat back what they have said to you, and then contact the next controller. When you switch frequencies, tell the next controller that you are with them. The new controller will just come back and say, "rodger," or, "Good afternoon," or some other acknowledgment, depending on their mood. The last person you will talk to on your way into the airport is the tower, and they will clear you to land. The following example uses Falcon Field:

1. Depart Falcon Field to the south, just like you are going to Chandler. Once you are a few miles south, you will ask for a frequency change. The controller will come back and say, "Frequency change approved."

2. After you are approved for a frequency change, you will contact the flight service station. Remember to tell them the frequency you are transmitting on so they can contact you.

You: Prescott radio Cessna 63931 with you on 122.6.

Prescott: Cessna 63931 go ahead.

You: Cessna 63931 I would like to open my VFR flight plan from Falcon Field to Tucson.

Prescott: Cessna 63931 flight plan activated.

You: Thank you, have a good day, see ya, etc., Cessna 63931.

3. Once your flight plan is opened, contact Chandler tower to and request a transition.

4. Listen to the ATIS for Tucson International.

5. Now you are at the magenta flag on the map or the cement plant. At this point, you will make your initial contact with approach control.

You: Tucson Approach Cessna 63931.

Approach: Cessna 63931 state your request.

You: Cessna 63931 a one seventy two/uniform over the cement plant landing Tucson with Mike.

Approach: Cessna 63931 squawk 4553.

You: Squawk 4553 Cessna 63931.

Wait a few minutes, and then the controller will come back to you, just as they did at Williams Airport.

Approach: Cessna 63931 radar contact two miles south of the cement plant, make straight in runway 11 Left.

You: Straight in runway 11 Left Cessna 63931.

6. A few minutes later, approach will call you back and tell you to contact the tower.

Approach: Cessna 63931 contact Tucson Tower 118.6.

You: Contact tower 118.6 Cessna 63931.

7. Once you have gotten a clearance to change frequencies, you will call tower.

You: Tucson tower Cessna 63931 with you.

Tower: Cessna 63931 cleared to land runway 11 left.

You: Cleared to land runway 11 Left Cessna 63931.

Departing Class B and Class C Airspace: When you depart from an airport within the Class B or Class C airspace, the same process is reversed. This time, just start with the ATIS. You will hear a frequency for clearance delivery. You need to get a clearance to depart the airport. On your initial contact to clearance delivery, you want to tell them the following:

Who You Are: Cessna 63931

Where You Are: At the base of the tower.

Where You Want To Go: VFR to Falcon Field.

ATIS Information: With information November.

Clearance will come back and give you a clearance. Receiving a clearance is simple. Just write down the word CRAFT vertically, and then write down the clearance as the controller reads it to you:

CESSNA 63931

C: Cleared To—Cleared to Falcon Field

R: Route—After departure turn heading 320

A: Altitude—Climb and maintain 4,500

F: Departure Frequency—Contact approach on 120.4

T: Transponder—Squawk 4557

After you have received the clearance, just repeat it back and then call ground, just like you normally would. The rest of the radio communications are the same as before, except you will start with ground.