

### **Uncontrolled Airport©**

Regulatory provisions relating to traffic patterns are found in Parts 91, 93 and 97 of the FARs. ACs 90-42 and 90-66A are advisory for safety and efficiency. See-and-avoid requirement fully applies. All available information from AFD (Airport/Facilities Directory) AIM and NOTAMS is required by FAR. Use of Visual indicators (segmented circle, wind sock) must be used.

The straight-in approach to an uncontrolled airport is not, of itself, inherently dangerous. Straight in approaches, while not prohibited, must not be disruptive to normal pattern operations. Possible straight in approaches (as with instrument approaches) greatly increase see-and-be seen requirements. The straight-in eliminates the need to overfly and make a 45 entry. AC 90-66A advocates the 45 entry but indicates that the straight-in, IFR or VFR, should not require maneuvers that disrupt other traffic. FAR ,91.127(b) Says that all turns shall be to the left unless otherwise depicted. A straight-in requires no turns. NTSB Administrative Law Judges have found the straight in a violation of FAR 91.113.

Many uncontrolled airports may offer unicom service on the CTAF frequency given on the sectional. This means that there may be someone on the field to respond to a radio call during normal working hours.

#### **The callup is:**

"Name of field unicom, aircraft identification, location, altitude, request traffic advisories( or other request)and name of the field."

If there is a unicom response it may be limited to suggesting a runway and traffic direction. (The Good Samaritan situation has created liability they may not wish to assume with additional advice) If there is not unicom response all further transmissions should be addressed to "traffic".

Non-radio-equipped aircraft are expected to determine pattern in use. Since one in five General Aviation aircraft do not have radios. Radio use is not required but good sense dictates monitoring and use. One of the problem at uncontrolled airports is radio complacency. You begin to believe that if no one is on the radio that no one is there. Don't you believe it.

Some of the CTAF frequencies are quite congested on weekends. It is important that the NAME of the place/airport be the first and last word of any CTAF communication. This alerts pilots in your area and allows others to discount your presence. This change is of relatively recent origin, about 10 years. You will still hear many pilots failing to use this procedure because they were not initially taught that way. Relearning is, perhaps, the most difficult aspect of flying. Relearning is also one of the most resisted phases of instruction. However, what was good enough forty years ago or even five years ago is not good enough today.

Always include the runway number you plan to use. This provides an additional alert if someone missed the place/airport name as well as possible winds/ runways at nearby airports. Do not totally rely on such runway calls for what you should use. Since the use of the CTAF frequency nor the 45 degree entry is not REQUIRED you must use see-and-be-seen vigilance in all directions. If you have reason to believe

density altitude over 1000' above AGL exists it would be helpful to include your computation in your communications with other aircraft.  
Uncontrolled Airport Arrival

1. PLANNING

Runways  
Reporting points  
45 degree arrivals only  
Pattern altitude/direction  
Frequency

2. ARRIVAL

15 mile callup:

1. Podunk unicom Cessna 1234X KEY Intersection at 2000 request traffic advisories Podunk (if no answer...

Podunk traffic Cessna 1234X KEY Intersection at 2000 planing to rfly at 2000 prior to landing Podunk

2. Podunk traffic Cessna 1234X over the field at planning landing (runway) right/left traffic Podunk

DON'T MISREAD WIND SOCK, TETRAHEDRON, OR SEGMENTED CIRCLE!!!!

Depart over the field on a reciprocal 45 degree to the 45 degree entry. Lose half of altitude to pattern altitude. Execute a left/right course reversal while descending to pattern altitude on 45 degree entry. You should be at pattern altitude before reaching the pattern. This greatly improves your see/be seen opportunities. Arriving slightly high is better with high-wing and slightly low with low-wing aircraft for better visibility. Watch the ground for shadows.

Look for additional ways to determine runway in use, such as arriving or departing aircraft, smoke/dust/waves. Nearby airports are good indicators. Try to plan the most efficient arrival conducive to safety. Avoid the pattern altitude until you are in it.

DON'T FLY INTO THE PATTERN ALTITUDE IN THE BLIND!!!!!!

RADIO:

Podunk traffic Cessna 34X on 45 for (runway number) Podunk

Podunk traffic Cessna 34X right/left downwind for (runway number) Podunk

Podunk traffic Cessna 34X right/left base for (runway number) Podunk

Podunk traffic Cessna 34X final for (runway number) Podunk

PRIORITIES:

1. Fly the plane
2. Maintain proper altitudes and headings
3. Keep eyes outside cockpit and watch for traffic
4. Communicate
  - 122.7; 122.8, 123.0; etc
  - 122.9 Traffic only advisories at airports without frequency on sectional
  - 123.6 Uncontrolled field with FSS for arrival and departure only

Common mistakes:

- Not calling up soon enough to get advisory

- Not observing traffic pattern/windsock direction
- Turning downwind too close to runway
- Becoming distracted and not attending to airspeed and pattern orientation
- Trying to hit the end of the runway
- Delaying addition of power if low
- Delaying go around if a poor approach/flare
- Not clearing runway immediately

DEPARTURE:

1. Full 360 degree clearing turn on ground prior departure
2. Advise traffic of departure and direction

The addition of the name of the airport at the end of each radio call is by an AD (Advisory Circular) June of 1985. When an omission occurs you can be certain that the pilot has avoided additional training since 1985.

**Non-unicom Uncontrolled Airports:**

All callups are made to the airport "Location name, traffic, aircraft identification, position, altitude, intentions and location name" on 122.9. Any responses to your "blind" communications would be from other aircraft.