

VIEW FROM THE TOWER

Advice on safe operations from the tower managers of the nation's biggest general aviation aerodromes

Austral Images

Parafield

Following traffic: Maintain visual contact. Your circuit should ensure that you do not cut-off or cut in on other traffic.

Communication: Maintain a good listening watch to help your situational awareness and enable you to predict what is going to happen behind you as well as in front. Be careful not to over-transmit to other pilots or ATC because the result may be an incorrect assumption that a message has been received and understood.

Students and marginal VMC: Student pilots should not fly in marginal weather.

Aerodrome markings: You need to know what they are and what they mean.

– *Mary Bishop, Parafield unit tower manager.*

Jandakot

Parallel runways: You need to be careful to keep clear of other traffic – there isn't a large distance between the parallel runways. Don't fly through final because there is often another aircraft on final for the adjacent runway. Make sure you avoid crossing the extended centreline. On departure keep a good lookout. Allow for crosswind to ensure that you do not drift into the upwind leg of the parallel runway.

Circuit operations: Do not cut off traffic ahead of you. ATC need you to follow preceding traffic, especially in the circuit area. Don't just turn onto another leg of the circuit because you are at a certain level or over a certain landmark.

The size and shape of the circuit is based on many variables such as the number of aircraft operating, differing speeds of aircraft, glide approaches etc.

ATC will try to change the order in the circuit to give everyone the best chance of landing – we realise that an hour of go-arounds is not the most valuable training session. If you would like to be number one to another aircraft, ask the tower.

If it is possible we will approve it. This gives the controller the opportunity to advise the change of sequence to the other aircraft.

GAAP tracking and reporting points: General aviation aerodrome procedures (GAAP) are designed to keep inbound traffic away from outbound traffic. Be conscientious with your track keeping and don't cut corners – the small size of the GAAP zone means that the tracking points are often not that far apart.

ATC also rely on accurate reports at the inbound points for sequencing. If you are not right over the reporting point let ATC know, for example "half a mile south of Adventure World".

Departures to the west and north-west:

The ERSA entry for departures via Fremantle Golf Course states to track via Murdoch University and then has procedures to climb to 1500 ft. These procedures are often misunderstood. You must be established west of the Kwinana Freeway and over the Murdoch University open space before climbing to 1500 ft. This can be a problem when departing from runway 24R because if you climb when west of the freeway you could find yourself in conflict with traffic maintaining 1500 ft that are tracking for downwind from Adventure World.

– *Mike Tesser, Jandakot unit tower manager*

Moorabbin

Rolling take-offs: "When the aircraft is next at a holding point from which no backtrack on the runway is required the aircraft will make a rolling take-off if takeoff clearance is given." (AIP ENR 1.1-54 Para 36.2).

The expectation of a rolling takeoff is used by the aerodrome controller to judge departures in relation to arriving traffic. If the aircraft subsequently does not make a rolling takeoff, the knock-on effect to other traffic can result in lengthy delays.

Accurate position reports: If you report inbound before or after the GAAP



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approach point then report your position accurately, ie. “... two miles west of GMH inbound”. This assists ATC and other pilots with sequencing, traffic advice and sighting.

Delays at the holding point: Ideally pilots should be ready at the holding point. This keeps things moving and reduces delays for those behind.

Readbacks, the bane of pilots and controllers: While many pilots and controllers find readback requirements frustrating, it is true that readbacks save lives. They are a great opportunity to catch something that may become embarrassing, scary or sad before it happens. Especially conditional clearances such as: ATC – “Alpha Bravo Charlie behind the Cessna on final, line up runway 17L behind”; Pilot – “Behind Cessna lining up, ABC”.

ERSA knowledge: ERSA gives you information that will help your flight in the GAAP zone be safe, efficient and integrated with other aircraft flying in the area. If you are unsure about anything in ERSA, talk to local instructors or contact ATC or CASA. If you find that something is incorrect or you believe could be done better, again contact ATC or CASA.

– Warren Sparrow, Moorabbin unit tower manager

Archerfield

ERSA: Use the information in ERSA (see entry for Moorabbin).

Maps and nav: During your pre-flight planning and familiarisation, check the GAAP approach points on the VTC and – if you need to – transpose these to your other charts. Brief yourself on adjoining controlled airspace boundaries and watch the vertical airspace segregations.

Look-in, look-out: But do not fixate inside the cockpit. Scanning for other traffic is critical in the high density environment at GAAP aerodromes. Make sure the aircraft you have identified is the right one. If in doubt, ask.

Follow that aircraft: If you lose sight of traffic you should be following – tell the tower, ask for assistance.

Not sure about instructions or local procedures? Ask the tower. Inbound or outbound, VFR or IFR, if you are not sure, ask.

– George Lane, Archerfield unit tower manager

Bankstown/Camden

Runway incursions: This is a hazard at all airports; Bankstown is no exception. The problem is not confined to trainee pilots. The aerodrome owner, air traffic control and CASA are working together to reduce the likelihood of an accident resulting from a runway incursion.

Pilots can help by being vigilant when taxiing and crossing multiple runways. Clearly identify the runway or taxiway that you are about to enter or cross before proceeding. You should also watch out for an intrusion onto a runway that is being used for landing or takeoff.

Drift into adjacent runways: Drift into adjacent parallel runways is a problem for pilots operating at Bankstown. You should maintain an accurate final track or departure track after take-off. Just because you have not seen traffic on an adjacent runway does not mean that there is no traffic present.

There may be other factors such as high-wing/low-wing combinations, faster following/overtaking traffic and so on. All pilots should treat an adjacent final or upwind as if there is another aircraft close abeam.

Drift is also a problem for go-rounds. Listen out and watch for adjacent traffic on the left or right and for overflying helicopter traffic at 500 ft.

Radio transmissions: The workload of most air traffic control systems is often dictated by radio transmissions.

The more superfluous words, the more repeated instructions, the more checking for accuracy or requesting readbacks or confirming or getting details, the less traffic can be processed.

The air traffic control system would be much more effective and efficient if everyone followed the AIP radio transmission requirements and limited additional calls to those needed for safety and operational purposes.

Sydney controlled airspace infringement: Take a look at the Sydney VTC and check out how close the Bankstown GAAP zone is to arrival and departure paths for the Sydney runways. The importance of remaining inside the Bankstown zone to avoid conflict with Sydney aircraft traffic is clear.

The Sydney basin visual pilot guide (Sydney VPG) can help you in find the visual fix points so that you do not violate the Sydney control zone or conflict with Sydney traffic.

If you need an airways clearance to enter the Sydney control zone then you must be on a flight plan.

You should ask for clearance well in advance.

Awareness of circuit altitudes: The *Sydney VPG* and the ERSA provide good information on circuit altitudes at Bankstown and Camden. Compliance with altitude requirements provides vertical separation from other traffic.

– Debra O’Keeffe, Bankstown/Camden unit tower manager