



Common ATC Terms & Meanings

ABEAM

- An aircraft is "abeam" a fix, point, or object when that fix, point, or object is approximately 90 degrees to the right or left of the aircraft track. Abeam indicates a general position rather than a precise point.

ACKNOWLEDGE

- Let me know that you have received my message.

AFFIRMATIVE

- Yes

BLOCKED

- Used to indicate that a radio transmission has been distorted or interrupted due to multiple simultaneous radio transmissions.
- You will probably hear this one when the frequency is busy.

CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF

- ATC authorization for an aircraft to depart.

CLEARED FOR THE OPTION

- ATC authorization for an aircraft to make a touch and go, low approach, missed approach, stop and go, or full-stop landing at the discretion of the pilot.
- It is normally used in training so that an instructor can evaluate a student's performance under changing situations.

CLEARED TO LAND

- ATC authorization for an aircraft to land.

CLOSED TRAFFIC

- Operations involving takeoffs and landings [touch-and-goes] or low approaches where the aircraft does not exit the traffic pattern.

EXPEDITE

- Used by ATC when prompt compliance is required to avoid the development of an imminent situation.
- In other words-HURRY UP!

FLY HEADING (Degrees)

- The specific heading ATC wants the pilot to fly.
- The pilot may have to turn to, or continue on, a specific compass direction in order to comply with the instructions.
- The pilot is expected to turn in the shorter direction to the heading unless otherwise instructed by ATC.

FUEL REMAINING

- A phrase used by either pilots or controllers when relating to the fuel remaining on board until actual fuel exhaustion.

- When transmitting such information in response to either a controller's question or a pilot initiated cautionary advisory to air traffic control, pilots will state the APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MINUTES the flight can continue with the fuel remaining.
- All reserve fuel SHOULD BE INCLUDED in the time stated, as should an allowance for established fuel gauge system error.

MINIMUM FUEL

- Indicates that an aircraft's fuel supply has reached a state where, upon reaching the destination, it can accept little or no delay.
- This is not an emergency situation but merely indicates an emergency situation is possible should any undue delay occur.

GO AROUND

- Instructions for a pilot to abandon his approach to landing. Additional instructions may follow.
- Unless otherwise advised by ATC, a VFR aircraft or an aircraft conducting visual approach should overfly the runway while climbing to traffic pattern altitude and enter the traffic pattern via the crosswind leg.
- A pilot on an IFR flight plan making an instrument approach should execute the published missed approach procedure or proceed as instructed by ATC; e.g., "Go around" (additional instructions if required).

HAVE NUMBERS

- Used by pilots to inform ATC that they have received runway, wind, and altimeter information only.

HOW DO YOU HEAR ME?

- A question relating to the quality of the transmission or to determine how well the transmission is being received.

IDENT

- A request for a pilot to activate the aircraft transponder identification feature. This will help the controller to confirm an aircraft identity or to identify an aircraft.
- Do not confuse this with the term “*squawk*”, which means to tune the transponder code or transponder operating mode, such as Mode C, altitude reporting, a controller gives you.

IMMEDIATELY

- Used by ATC when such action compliance is required to avoid an imminent situation.
- In other words-DO IT NOW!

MAINTAIN

- Concerning altitude or flight level, the term means to remain at the altitude or flight level specified.
- The phrase "climb and" or "descend and" normally precedes "maintain" and the altitude assignment; e.g., "descend and maintain 5,000."
- Concerning other ATC instructions, the term is used in its literal sense; e.g., maintain VFR.

MAKE SHORT APPROACH

- Used by ATC to inform a pilot to alter his/her traffic pattern so as to

make a short final approach.

MAYDAY

- The international radio telephony distress signal.
- When repeated three times, it indicates imminent and grave danger and that immediate assistance is requested.

NEGATIVE

- "No," or "permission not granted," or "that is not correct."

NEGATIVE CONTACT

- Used by pilots to inform ATC that the previously issued traffic is not in sight.
- It may be followed by the pilot's request for the controller to provide assistance in avoiding the traffic.
- Also used by pilots to inform ATC they were unable to contact ATC on a particular frequency.

RADAR CONTACT

- Used by ATC to inform an aircraft that it is identified on the radar display and radar flight following will be provided until radar identification is terminated.

RADAR SERVICE TERMINATED

- Used by ATC to inform a pilot that he will no longer be provided any of the services that could be received while in radar contact.
- Radar service is automatically terminated, and the pilot is not advised

in the following cases:

1. An aircraft cancels its IFR flight plan, except within Class B airspace, Class C airspace, a TRSA, or where Basic Radar service is provided.
2. An aircraft conducting an instrument, visual, or contact approach has landed or has been instructed to change to advisory frequency.
3. An arriving VFR aircraft, receiving radar service to a tower controlled airport within Class B airspace, Class C airspace, a TRSA, or where sequencing service is provided, has landed; or to all other airports, is instructed to change to tower or advisory frequency.
4. An aircraft completes a radar approach.

READ BACK

- Repeat my message back to me.

REPORT

- Used to instruct pilots to advise ATC of specified information; e.g., "Report passing Rome VOR."

SAY AGAIN

- Used to request a repeat of the last transmission.
- Usually specifies transmission or a portion not understood or received; e.g., "Say again all after ABRAM VOR."