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ADVISORY CIRCULAR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: FREQUENCY DISCIPLINE

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1. PURPOSE. This circular restates and reemphasizes the need for pilots to be constantly aware of the importance of practicing frequency discipline in the normal conduct of operations.
 2. REFERENCES. Airman's Information Manual.
 3. GENERAL.
 - a. The steady and significant increase in air traffic is being accompanied by a required increase in voice communications between controllers and pilots. Most air traffic control (ATC) frequencies are simplex, meaning that both the facility and the pilot transmit and receive on the same frequency. This has often been referred to as a "party telephone line." Simply stated when one party is transmitting on the frequency, it cannot be used by another party.
 - b. Excessive and unnecessary transmissions by a pilot interfere not only with the normal operational routine, but they can also create a hazard by blocking an emergency transmission from the facility or another pilot. This can be particularly critical at radar locations where radar vectors are provided to separate and sequence aircraft and vectoring airspace is limited. In any case, unnecessary use of a frequency is just not good operating practice and is a disservice to other pilots as well as to the ATC facility.
 - c. ATC is constantly reviewing means for reducing and refining phraseologies and transmissions. In cooperation with the industry much has been accomplished. For example, position reports have been virtually eliminated when aircraft are under radar control; standard
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instrument departures have been developed at many locations; and standard instrument arrival procedures are being studied for possible application on a national basis. Although these and other actions taken have significantly reduced frequency congestion, much more can be accomplished by recognition of and action on factors within the control of the individual using ATC frequencies.

4. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR PILOTS.

- a. Be aware of the need for frequency discipline.
- b. Be aware of and tuned to the proper frequency to use for the specific ATC function being provided.
- c. Listen before talking. There could be emergency transmissions on the frequency you intend to use. Also, listening will often provide you with information you need if you intercept a controller's transmission to another aircraft; i.e., wind direction, velocity, runway in use, altimeter setting, weather, etc. (When you have intercepted this type of transmission, be sure to tell the controller you "have the numbers" or use a similar term.)
- d. Say what needs to be said in conducting or planning your flight only to the extent that it is clear to both you and the controller what you want or need to do.
- e. Flight and classroom instructors should assure that student pilots are aware of the need for frequency discipline and that students are indoctrinated in the use of proper and timely phraseology. Experienced pilots should periodically check for the development of bad habits in the use of radio techniques.
- f. Check your speech rates and enunciation. Are you regularly being requested to repeat a transmission? If so, you may be talking too fast or not clearly. Do not be too self-critical if this happens occasionally. The controller may be listening to several frequencies and may not hear part of your transmission because of one from a pilot on a different frequency. Even the high-density facilities combine positions of operation during periods of light traffic.
- g. Remember in using a simplex frequency when you talk, you cannot hear on that frequency.

- h. Assure that microphone buttons are closed when you complete a transmission. Frequencies are often jammed by this condition; and even if the offender can be identified, there is no way to inform him of the situation.
 - i. As a cardinal rule, keep the frequency to be used available for use by everyone to the maximum extent possible.
5. INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION. In order to provide the broadest exposure of the information herein, user organizations which publish bulletins to their members should include any or all of the foregoing points.



William M. Flener
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