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# ADVISORY CIRCULAR

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

**SUBJECT:** PRACTICE INSTRUMENT APPROACHES

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1. PURPOSE. This circular advises the aviation community of measures to achieve more organized and controlled operations where practice instrument approaches are conducted.
  2. REFERENCES.
    - a. Airman's Information Manual
    - b. Order 7110.48
  3. DISCUSSIONS. In terminal areas where simulated instrument approaches are conducted, it is Air Traffic Service policy to provide for separation of such operations at locations where approach control facilities are located and, as resources permit, at certain other locations served by approach control. It must be clearly understood, however, that even though the controller may be providing separation, pilots are required to comply with basic visual flight rules (FAR 91.105). Application of ATC procedures or any action taken by the controller to avoid traffic conflicts does not relieve the pilot of his responsibility to see and avoid other traffic when weather conditions permit and to maintain appropriate terrain and obstruction clearance. (FARs 91.67 and 91.79)
  4. ATC PROCEDURES.
    - a. Simulated instrument approaches are considered to be instrument approaches made in VFR conditions by aircraft not on IFR flight plan. "Successive instrument approaches" means one or more low approaches or touch-and-go landings made by an IFR aircraft that is being provided full IFR service prior to the termination of its flight or departure from the area. If an IFR aircraft wishes
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to practice approaches, ATC will handle them simply as a series of full IFR approaches. The controller will, however, control such flights to ensure that they do not disrupt the flow of arriving and departing itinerant IFR or VFR aircraft. Moreover, successive IFR approaches do not have priority over simulated instrument approaches.

- b. Before practicing an instrument approach to an airport with a tower, pilots of VFR aircraft should inform approach control or the tower of the type of approach they desire to simulate and how they intend to terminate it; i.e., full-stop landing, touch-and-go, or missed approach maneuver. At airports without a tower, such pilots should notify flight service stations providing airport advisory service of the type of approach they will be simulating.
- c. When authorization is granted to practice approaches to airports where an approach control facility is located and to certain other airports served by approach control, the controller will approve the simulated approach, instruct the aircraft to maintain VFR conditions, and will provide IFR separation between aircraft he has authorized to simulate instrument approaches and all other IFR aircraft.
- d. Except in an emergency, VFR aircraft cleared to make simulated instrument approaches must not deviate from the approved procedure until cleared to do so by the controller.
- e. At radar approach control locations when a full approach procedure (procedure turn, etc.) cannot be approved, pilots should expect to be vectored to a final approach course for a simulated approach which is compatible with the general direction of traffic at that airport.
- f. Pilots should anticipate that the controller may find it necessary to deny approval or withdraw previous approval when traffic conditions warrant. Controllers are required to handle simulated instrument approaches in such a manner as to avoid interrupting the flow of arriving and departing itinerant IFR or VFR aircraft.
- g. When granting approval for a simulated instrument approach, the controller will usually ask the pilot to report to the tower prior to or over the final approach fix inbound.

- h. When authorization is granted to simulate approaches to an airport with a tower but where approach control does not provide IFR separation to aircraft simulating approaches, the tower will approve the simulated approach, instruct the aircraft to maintain VFR conditions, and issue traffic information, as appropriate.
- i. When an aircraft notifies a flight service station providing Airport Advisory Service of intent to simulate an instrument approach, IFR separation will not be provided. The station specialist will acknowledge the message and issue known traffic information, but will neither approve or disapprove the approach.
- j. Pilots simulating instrument approaches should be particularly alert for other aircraft operating in the local traffic pattern or in proximity to the airport.



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