

Practice Instrument Approach Procedures at Casa Grande

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The following procedures are recommended in an attempt to develop standardization among all pilots that use the Stanfield VOR and the Casa Grande instrument approaches. This letter is not intended as a directive. It is intended to serve as a tool to communicate the training industry's desires. Any questions or concerns to these procedures are welcome by contacting the Arizona Flight Training Workgroup (see web site address above).

Pilots should carefully monitor the Casa Grande AWOS before making their initial call 8 to 12 nautical miles from Stanfield VOR (TFD) on 122.7 to request, "top of stack." The aircraft occupying the "top of stack" will respond with their altitude to inform the approaching aircraft. The approaching aircraft will then respond by giving their position in miles, direction from the VOR and altitude, estimated time of arrival at TFD, as well as announcing that they will occupy the "top of stack", even though they are not yet at TFD.

Altitude separation will be 500 feet between aircraft. Courtesy, consideration, and vigilance are what make this system work. Please abide by the altitude separation. It is understood that instructors need to instruct, however, they must also monitor and work their position in the stack.

If an aircraft is conducting the missed approach procedure at Casa Grande and returning to TFD for another approach for which there is no one else waiting in line, that aircraft shall have the right-of-way over any incoming aircraft arriving for the procedure providing that aircraft has not yet reached the initial approach fix. Courtesy and consideration will suggest that the newly arriving aircraft call the one on the missed approach and request that that aircraft use a lower altitude to commence their approach ahead of the incoming aircraft.

Aircraft needing to practice holding should always use an altitude well above the holding stack in an effort to segregate approach practice from holding. The AFTW suggests holding at 7,000 ft. MSL, or as appropriate for the traffic. If holding aircraft intend to accomplish a practice approach, they can work their way into the stack as they near the end of their holding practice.

As aircraft work down through the stack, radio calls should be made. A suggested call would be, "Stanfield Traffic Cessna 123 is 5,000 ft. descending 4,500 ft. Stanfield VOR." Calls should be as short and precise as possible. Even though the aircraft is not physically at the holding fix they should still make the call as they work down in their turn. Even when the weather precludes "stacking" at Stanfield. The altitude assignments can be used to regulate the order in the stack while the aircraft holds well clear of the stack, to wait their turn to enter over the VOR.

A call should be made entering the holding pattern at TFD and each time an altitude change is made. The outbound turn in the Hold is not necessarily "Procedure Turn Outbound." When the aircraft is in line to begin the instrument approach (and they intend to do so) they should callout "Procedure Turn Outbound, 4,000 ft. descending 3,500 ft." (or as appropriate). The procedure turn inbound callout should be made when the aircraft is on the 228° radial inbound, and not at the beginning of the turn inbound. The "procedure turn outbound" call is not defined in the AIM and is only a courtesy and convenience in working the stack. The "Procedure Turn Inbound" callout is defined in the AIM as being established on the inbound course.

Procedure Turn Inbound and Outbound calls should only be made in conjunction with the initiation of the instrument approach procedure and not when making circuits in the holding pattern.

While on the approach, an inbound call should be made at TFD, ROXIE, and Maricopa Highway to allow VFR aircraft in the Casa Grande pattern to govern their approaches. A suggested call would be "Casa Grande traffic, Cessna 123 TFD inbound Runway 5 Casa Grande." If conditions require a circling approach, "Circle to land runway 23" should be added to the call.

Which runway is in use?

Typically everyone practicing instrument approaches accepts up to a 10 knot tailwind component for runway 5 before using circling procedures for runway 23. Runway 23 is established as the active runway as soon as the first pilot selects and uses it as the runway in use. Other arriving aircraft should conform to the established runway in use whenever anyone remains in the traffic pattern.

Back course approaches on Runway 23

If anyone is using a non-published back course runway 23 or published GPS runway 23 approach procedure they should be aware of other aircraft flying the published runway 5 approach procedures and avoid conflict by remaining higher at all times.

Simulated radar vectors for the ILS or VOR final

If an Instructor elects to provide simulated radar vectors to the final approach course they should give way to all other aircraft proceeding via the full published route structure.

Flying the Missed approach procedure

When flying the published missed approach for runway 5 it is recommended to return to the VOR above 3,500 ft. Other aircraft, including those working with ABQ Center, may be entering at the published 3,500 ft. and not be monitoring or communicating on the CTAF. Returning to the VOR at a minimum of 4,000 ft. provides for an extra margin of separation and safety for the possibility of a Procedure turn inbound aircraft whose appropriate calls were blocked or missed.

Flying a touch-and-go procedure on Runway 5

When flying the initial takeoff or touch-and-go, make a left downwind departure towards TFD VOR. This will provide the required separation between aircraft on the missed approach procedure. While flying a practice approach, the Instructor pilot may not want to announce plans for the missed approach and leave the decision making for the pilot flying when breaking out of the simulated weather conditions at minimums. If another aircraft is in the traffic pattern and is a position to create a conflict with the instrument approach aircraft a courtesy call may become appropriate to avoid a conflict. Normally the aircraft on final has the right-of-way and the traffic pattern aircraft extends their downwind to accommodate the situation.

Letting Down in the Stack

While holding over the VOR with a preceding aircraft in sight that is not in a position or condition to execute the approach, but the following aircraft is ready for the approach, the expeditious movement of the stack can be enhanced if the following aircraft announces intentions to begin the approach and can maintain visual contact with the preceding aircraft. Of course this should only be done when everyone is made aware of the stack change of order by simply stating, "Do you mind if I make the approach in front of you?"

Safety should never be compromised by syllabus content requirements or frustrations from being stepped on over the CTAF or being squeezed out of the stack. If we all try to get along, everyone will gain the maximum benefit of flying the maximum amount of approaches the system was designed to provide.