



VFR INITIAL CLEARANCE ON GROUND

1. Introduction

This article is applicable only for VFR pilots on a controlled airfield and for air traffic controllers handling VFR departures from a controlled airfield.

The first task for a pilot is to fly safely. Before flying, he needs charts and shall prepare his flight.

The first task for an air/ground traffic controller is to have VFR charts when controlling and read them all in order to catch all local restrictions and recommendations.

2. Initial VFR clearance for departure

2.1. Generalities

Inside controlled zones or airfields, VFR pilots have to receive an initial clearance. Usually, the VFR pilot will start his aircraft prior to contacting the controller. And he is ready to taxi.

Be aware that some specific airfields do not allow this; please consult your charts. Specific rules have to be taken from the local procedures.

The controller gives the initial VFR clearance to the pilot. This clearance can include:

- The taxi clearance to adequate holding point of an active runway.
- Waiting clearance on apron if the traffic is not ready for an immediate VFR departure
- Transponder/squawk code
- The exit point defined by the tower controller when needed or required by regulation
- Altitude and speed restrictions defined by the tower controller when needed
- Ground traffic information when needed
- Local weather and/or QNH if there is no ATIS or no METAR information available.

As a minimum, an initial clearance shall include taxi clearance with a transponder code or wait clearance on apron.

Of course, there is no specific rule to follow whether to give particular information or not . It is the controller's ability and efficiency that drives the clearance flow.

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2.2. Night VFR – NVFR

The night VFR flight – called NVFR sometimes – is a VFR flight which is partly performed during the aeronautic night.

A NVFR clearance has to contain the route, how to leave the airport.

This is either done using:

- a specific direction or landmark point
- reporting points
- VFR departure routes

In some countries or airfields, night VFR clearances are not allowed. Please consult your national and local regulation.

2.3. Special VFR – SVFR

In a controlled aerodrome, the air traffic controller can **issue a special VFR clearance to an aircraft**, which is below the VMC minima in his controlled zone, in order **to let him reach a new zone where the weather conditions follow the VMC rules**.

Flight visibilities reduced to not less than 1500m (clear of clouds) is permitted for special VFR flights at speeds that give adequate opportunity to observe other traffic or any obstacles in time to avoid collision.

Special VFR clearance use depends on your local regulation (ATS authority). This type of clearance can be forbidden in some countries or on some airfields.

2.4. Advices for the pilot

As a pilot performing a VFR flight and departing from a controlled airfield, you must contact the ATC before taxi in order to have the initial VFR clearance.

You will obtain this clearance from a ground or tower controller.

In other airports, you may ask the approach controller to obtain your clearance.

In IVAO, it is **mandatory that every user connected as a pilot fills a flight plan even for a VFR flight**. The route is not mandatory for VFR, but it can be useful for air traffic controllers.

There is no pushback clearance for light aircraft. In real life, you use human power to push the aircraft to a free position on the apron. For bigger aircraft, you can position it on the apron in a place allowing enough space for taxi without the need of pushback.

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The following tasks shall have been done before initial contact:

- VFR Flight prepared (route, fuel, flight time, ...)
- Charts on board
- ATIS checked
- Weather check versus VMC conditions
- Aircraft checked on ground without moving

After your first contact with ATC, you will have the following possibilities:

- Taxi clearance to holding point, with or without exit point and altitude restrictions, airfield information, traffic information, transponder/squawk code.
- No clearance due to an extra departure delay

2.5. Advices for the controller

When managing VFR flights on ground, you need to know that VFR pilots want a quick departure and they are ready to go when calling the controller for the first time. VFR pilots usually already started their engines when contacting the controller.

There is no pushback need for a VFR flight (except for largest aircraft).

The mobility of a light aircraft is enough to avoid the pushback clearance. Then, you can give the taxi clearance during the first contact.

Before giving the taxi clearance, you must verify that:

- The pilot has filled a correct and adequate flight plan (in IVAO a pilot is not allowed to fly without filling a minimum information in his flight plan)
- The departure sequence can allow a VFR departure within maximum 15/20 min.
- Too much delay before departure will make VFR unhappy. In real life, VFR pilots pay for their own fuel!

With an airspace class F or a non-controlled airfield (auto information airfield written on charts), as the active controller, you have to give traffic information only without any taxi instructions or even take-off or landing clearances.

The controller can manage VFR traffic selecting different taxiways, holding points or runways for VFR or light aircraft for any of the following reasons:

- Some taxiways can have resistance restrictions that allows the taxi of light aircraft only
- Light aircraft can have a specific holding point before departure in function of local restrictions
- VFR or light aircraft have a specific dedicated runway in function of local restrictions or departure

A special VFR flight shall not be considered as a normal VFR flight. Please consult your national regulations in order to know which are the separation and requirements for this type of flight.

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2.6. Example with a VFR exit point

Pilot ✈️	ATC 🗣️
✈️ F-GLRA, Cessna C172, at the general aviation apron, with information Delta , request taxi for VFR flight destination HighVilla	
	🗣️ F-RA, exit via SE, squawk 7006, taxi holding point runway 23 via taxiway Alpha
✈️ exiting via SE, squawk 7006, taxiing holding point runway 23 via taxiway Alpha, F-RA	

3. Additional advices when training in an aerodrome circuit

3.1. Advices for the pilot

When requesting to perform an aerodrome circuit pattern, the pilot must have in mind all aerodrome circuit parameters (altitude, hand, restriction...).

These parameters can be:

- Found on charts
- Known by pilot and air traffic controller as real local parameters
- Defined by the tower controller (in function of traffic)

A pilot shall perform the aerodrome circuit using the parameters published on the charts except when the air traffic controller gives the pilot specific parameters. The pilot shall perform the aerodrome circuit accordingly.

In IVAO, it is mandatory that every user connected as a pilot fills a flight plan even for an aerodrome circuit flight.

In that case, the route must be left blank because a traffic pattern is not a route, it shall not be inserted in the route field of the flight plan.

If you do not have the charts and do not know the pattern parameters, as a pilot, just obtain the parameters from the controller.

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3.2. Advices for the controller

The tower controller (or the controller who manages this position) is the responsible of the aerodrome circuit. In function of traffic (speed, type of aircraft ...), the controller can set different parameters for one or several aircraft performing an aerodrome circuit. That is the controller's responsibility.

When giving an initial VFR clearance for an aerodrome circuit, you can give the circuit parameters inside the initial clearance as a reminder for the pilot. It is sometimes useful especially for new IVAO pilots as there are few of them that have the required charts.

When giving an aerodrome circuit clearance, as a controller, you must be sure that the aircraft will not wait more than 5 minutes at the holding point.

3.3. Examples

Example without circuit description:

Pilot ✈️ ⬇️	ATC ⬆️
✈️ F-RA, Cessna C172, at the general aviation apron, with information Delta, request taxi for circuit patterns	
	⬆️ F-RA, squawk 7006, taxi holding point runway 23

If there is no circuit description, the pilot shall follow the circuit published on charts.

Example with circuit description:

Pilot ✈️	ATC ⬆️
✈️ F-RA, Cessna C172, at the general aviation apron, with information Delta, request taxi for circuit patterns	
	⬆️ F-RA, right hand circuit, 1400feet, squawk 7006, taxi holding point runway 23

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