

# Standard RT Phraseology

This document is for reference only and is based on the CAP 413.  
Please check the latest version of the original document to stay updated on standard phraseology and local procedures.

Service	Suffix
Area Control	CONTROL
Radar	RADAR
MATZ	ZONE
Flight Information	INFORMATION
Clearance Delivery	DELIVERY

Three main categories of aeronautical communications service:

- Air Traffic Control Service (ATC) which can only be provided by licensed Air Traffic Control Officers
- Flight Information Service (FIS)
- AD Air/Ground Communication Service (AGCS) provided by Radio Operators who are not licensed.

Other categories include VOLMET, SIGMET, ATIS...

Categories of Message in order of priority:

1. Distress messages
2. Urgency messages
3. Communications relating to direction finding
4. Flight safety messages
5. Meteorological messages
6. Flight Regularity messages
7. Service Communications
8. Other

Initial call on Approach control IFR flights.

1. Callsign
2. SID or Standard Departure Route Designator
3. Current or passing level
4. Initial climb level

On frequency change to a different ATC unit, the initial call should include A/C identification and level **only**.

## Initial Call – VFR flight

initial call to ATSU should only include minimum information:


1. The service that an enroute flight requires; or
2. The clearance/info that a joining or departing flight requires




Position Reporting shall contain:

1. A/C identification
2. Position
3. Time
4. Level
5. Next position and ETA


Where flight progress data is available from other sources, A/C may be exempted from position reporting requirements




Westbury Approach,  
G-ABCD, request Basic  
Service




G-ABCD, Westbury  
Approach, pass your  
message



G-ABCD, PA28 local  
flight from Borton,  
Wells altitude 3500 feet  
Wessex 1008, VFR,  
tracking to Salisbury



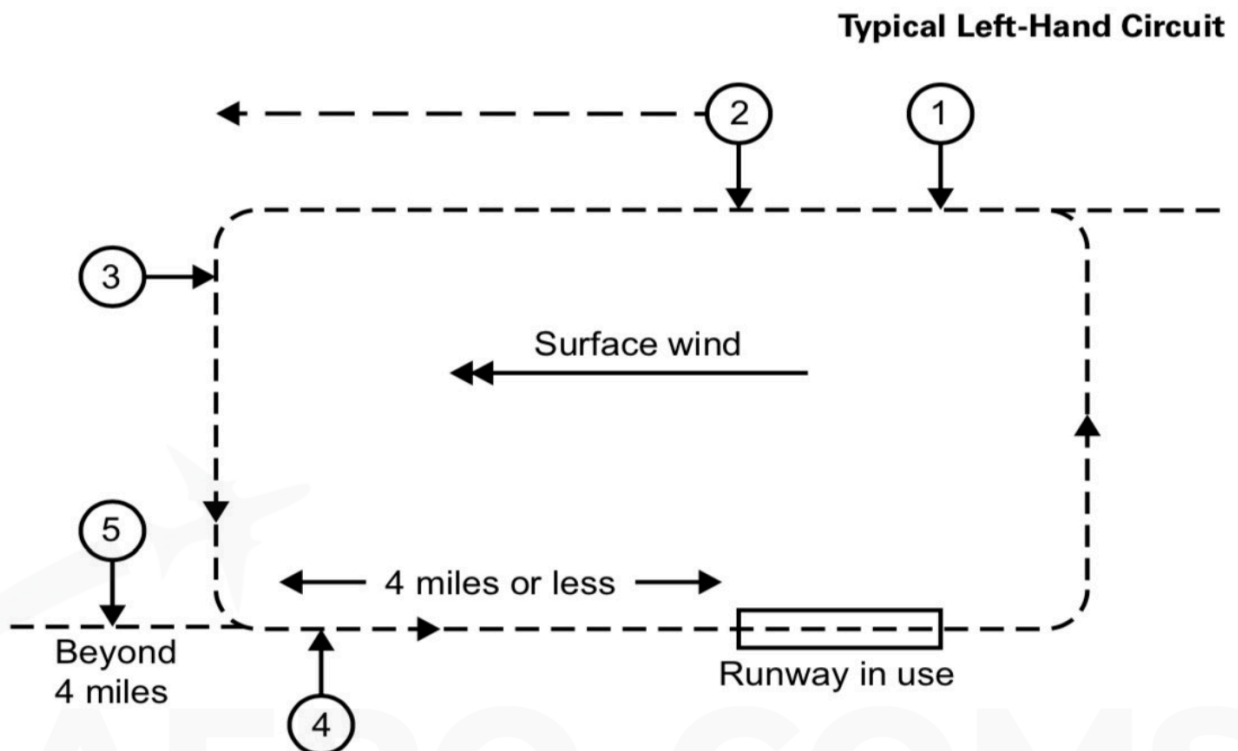
G-CD Roger, Basic Service,  
traffic is a Cessna 172,  
15NW South of Westbury  
VFR, tracking to Wells at  
2500 feet, Report Salisbury



Basic Service, Wilco,  
G-CD

## Designated Positions in the Traffic Circuit

Figure 1 Designated positions in the traffic circuit



**Position 1** Aircraft reports on 'Downwind' leg.

**Position 2** Aircraft reports 'Late downwind' if it is on the downwind leg, has been unable to report 'Downwind' and has passed the downwind end of the runway.

**Position 3** Aircraft reports 'Base' leg (if required).

**Position 4** Aircraft reports '**Final**'. Clearance to land issued here.

**Position 5** Aircraft reports '**Long final**' (between 8 and 4 miles) when aircraft is on a straight in approach.

**NOTE 1:** For light aircraft operations, circuit dimensions may be reduced but the relative RTF reporting points are maintained.

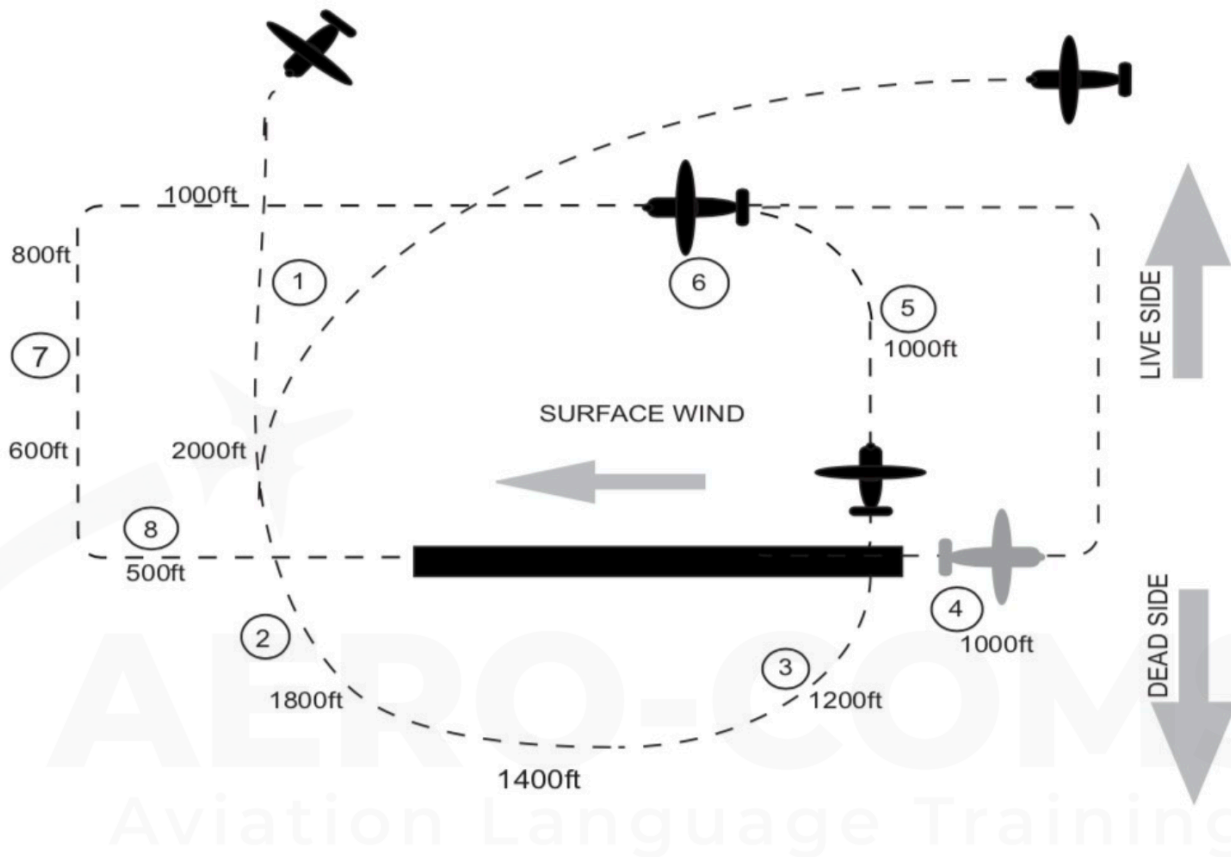
**NOTE 2:** For details of military visual circuit patterns see Chapter 11.

Standard overhead join comprises the following:

1. Overfly at 2000ft above Aerodrome Elevation.
2. If not already known, determine the circuit direction from signals square, other traffic or windstock.
3. Descend on the 'dead side' to circuit height
4. Join the circuit by crossing the upwind end of the runway at circuit height.
5. Position downwind.

**Figure 2 Standard Overhead Join Procedure**

**NOTE:** This diagram is not to scale and is provided for illustrative purposes only



First radio call should be made 5 - 10 miles from the aerodrome and joining checks completed.


- 1 Maintain 2000ft above aerodrome elevation or 1000ft above promulgated circuit level (based on QNH from the nearest available source), and observe windssock and traffic. Keep aerodrome a suitable distance on the left of the aircraft. Report OVERHEAD. Include the appropriate runway if determined. If unable to ascertain the runway in use continue circling overhead.
- 2 When runway and circuit direction are ascertained begin letting down on the dead side. If required, report DEAD SIDE DESCENDING (Note: Once the circuit direction has been established, all turns must be in the circuit direction).
- 3 Position to cross within the upwind threshold at circuit height.
- 4 Watch for aircraft taking off, as they could pose a hazard.
- 5 Watch for existing circuit traffic and adjust your path to sequence safely.
- 6 Call downwind.
- 7 Make optional call BASE LEG if required.
- 8 Report FINAL.

Requests for circuit-joining should be made with sufficient time.


When conditions allow for it you can ask for a straight-in approach.

If ATC asks to pass your message state:

1. Callsign
2. Type
3. Position
4. Altitude
5. Other relevant information




G-ABCD, request taxi



G-CD, taxi holding point C2, runway 06 via taxiway C, surface wind 060 10 knots, QNH 998 hectopascals, left hand circuit

On a controlled AD when reporting your position in the circuit, you can state "callsign + downwind/base/final" only.



Roger, taxi holding point C2, runway 06 via taxiway C, QNH 998 hectopascals, G-CD

Pilots can request a low pass over the runway

at the holding point...




G-CD, C2 Ready for departure




G-CD, Hold position




Holding, G-CD




G-CD, runway 06 take-off at your discretion, surface wind 270 degrees 15 knots




Runway 06 taking off, G-CD




G-CD, Traffic is a Cessna 172 base leg, runway 06 take off at your discretion, surface wind 270 15




Runway 06 taking off, G-CD



G-CD, Via C2 runway 06 take-off at your discretion, surface wind 270 15



Via C2 runway 06 taking off, G-CD



G-CD, Do you require to backtrack the runway?




Affirm, G-CD


## Direction Finding (DF)

Stations that offer VDF service are listed in the UK AIP AD. Each A/C transmission shall be ended by the A/C callsign. The direction-finding station will reply:


1. The appropriate phrase or Q code.
2. Bearing or heading in degrees.
3. Class of bearing.
4. Time, if necessary.



Kennington Approach, G-ABCD, request QDM G-ABCD



G-ABCD, Kennington Approach, QDM 090 degrees class Bravo





QDM 090 degrees class Bravo, G-ABCD



## Clearance to enter Control Zones (CTR)

Majority of CTRs are Class D, permitting VFR flights subject to ATC clearance


 Greenfield Approach,  
G-ABCD, request Traffic  
Service and zone transit


 G-ABCD, Greenfield  
Approach, pass your  
message

## Flight Information Services

Pilots requiring an ATS outside controlled airspace should establish comms with appropriate ATSU after 'pass your message' with:

1. Aircraft Callsign
2. Aircraft Type
3. Departure AD
4. Destination AD
5. Present position
6. Level
7. Additional details (squawk)

 G-ABCD, Cessna 172,  
from Seaton to Borton,  
overhead Selden,  
altitude 2500 feet  
Wessex 998  
hectopascals,  
estimating Hampton  
03, request  
Traffic Service and zone  
transit

 G-CD, remain outside  
controlled airspace, expect  
joining clearance at 45. Time  
is 40

## Emergency Phraseology

2 types: Distress & Urgency

Emergency calls on 121.5 MHz

1. 'MAYDAY/PAN PAN'
2. Name of the station addressed
3. Callsign
4. Type of A/C
5. Nature of emergency
6. Intentions
7. Position, FL and HDG
8. Pilot qualification
9. Other useful info

## Relayed Emergency Message



MAYDAY MAYDAY  
MAYDAY Milthorpe  
Tower, G-ABCD, have  
intercepted MAYDAY  
from G-BJRD, I say  
again G-BJRD Cessna  
172 engine failure  
forced landing 10 miles  
west of Wicken VOR,  
1000 feet descending,  
heading 120, IMC  
rating, over



G-ABCD, Milthorpe Tower,  
Roger your relayed MAYDAY  
from G-BJRD