



# AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES HELP NOTES No1

## AFISO and AGO SERVICES

**NOT TO BE USED FOR REAL WORLD AVIATION**

Version 3.1

Prepared by

Neville Munro,  
Traffic Services Manager,  
CIX VFR CLUB.

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### 1. BACKGROUND.

- 1.1 CIX VFR CLUB members spend most of their flying on-line, VFR/VMC. There is almost no ATC on VATSIM at minor aerodromes and airstrips. RW these are usually staffed by an **Airfield Flight Information Service Officer (AFISO)** or an **Air Ground (radio) Operator (AGO)**. Currently, these appointments are not VATSIM controller rating / validations and can only be manned by a VATSIM controller, S2 and above. There are a limited number of S2 (and above) controllers who are also CIX members or enjoy controlling VFR.
- 1.2 **The CIX VFR CLUB has begun a programme of training CIX members to act as AFISOs. Operators without a VATSIM rating of S2(+), may not control on VATSIM. The CIX AFISO or AGO operators will use a room in CIX TeamSpeak to provide their service and will operate ON CIX TEAMSPEAK for the benefit of OTHER CIX CLUB MEMBERS only.**
- 1.3 The TeamSpeak room used by the **CIX AFISO/AGO Controller** is **JUST** for the provision of an Air Traffic Service to CIX pilots, **NOT FOR GENERAL CHAT**. **If you are asked to be quiet, or leave, PLEASE DO SO. USE IT AS YOU WOULD ANY CONTROLLER FREQUENCY.**
- 1.4 **If whilst you are receiving a service on TS3, an on-line controller 'bing-bongs' you to give you a service, you MUST let the CIX AFISO on TS3 know AT ONCE. They will then close the TeamSpeak service, advising CIX pilots to contact the VATSIM / on-line Controller.**
- 1.5 **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD NON-MEMBERS BE GIVEN ACCESS TO THE CLUB TEAMSPEAK SERVICE, BY GIVING LOGON DETAILS.**

## 2. THE FUNCTION OF THE AFISO / AGO.

- 2.1 The function of the AFISO/AGO is the provision of advice and information useful for the safe and efficient conduct of aerodrome traffic, including assisting pilots in the prevention of collisions (in the air and on the ground).
- 2.2 a) An **AFISO** can control (issue instructions) to A/C and Vehicles on the ground, (**NOT INCLUDING the RUNWAY**, except for crossing traffic.)
- b) The **AGO** CANNOT CONTROL (issue instructions) to A/C or Vehicles ON THE GROUND.
- c) **NEITHER the AFISO nor the AGO** can ISSUE INSTRUCTIONS OR CLEARANCES TO A/C IN THE AIR, nor can they provide a **TRAFFIC SERVICE** TO A/C IN THE AIR. They may only provide **TRAFFIC and AIRPORT INFORMATION**.
- d) They **CAN PASS** clearances and instructions to pilots **AS AN AGENT OF A HIGHER AUTHORITY**. If the AFISO / AGO feels a situation is being made potentially dangerous by one pilot, he will have Written instructions or procedures **FROM THE AIRPORT AUTHORITIES** to enable him to **ISSUE AN APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTION** to the offending pilot.
- e) **Only the AFISO** can provide **ADVISORY** information to A/C **LANDING OR DEPARTING THE RUNWAY**, which will be **land/take off AT YOUR DISCRETION**. **THIS is NOT A CLEARANCE**, if **YOU** decide it is safe to do so, do it, **YOUR decision**. **Then say what you are doing**.
- 2.3 **TRAFFIC INFORMATION** is a report **FROM pilot 'A'** of his location and actual or intended action to the **AFISO**. This is then used to provide **TRAFFIC INFORMATION**, as appropriate, to other pilots, **if they have REPORTED to the AFISO**. **It will not indicate to the pilot, in any way, what to do about it! That is 'solely his responsibility'**.
- 2.4 **BOTH AFISO and AGO** rely on reports in order to provide a service. To make it work **ALL pilots within the ATZ MUST keep the AFISO/AGO well informed** of their position, current and/or intended actions. **With other traffic in the ATZ, you must make as many reports about your intentions/actions as you judge necessary for the safety of ALL A/C around you, ESPECIALLY yours**.
- 2.5 The **AFISO/AGO** CAN ONLY ISSUE FLIGHT INFORMATION from **REPORTS RECEIVED** from pilots. If your **LAST** report was '**TAKING OFF**', **UNTIL** you report, '**DOWNWIND**' your A/C will be reported to other traffic as '**LAST REPORTED DEPARTING THE RUNWAY**.'
- 2.6 The **AFISO/AGO** will only request position reports from pilots:-
- For a change of situation e. g. from approach to the overhead; commencement of taxiing; on reaching the runway.
  - Potentially dangerous situations, as assessed by the **AFISO/AGO**, reporting possible conflicting or unknown traffic.
  - Emergency situations.
- NB On VATSIM** There is a rule that requires controllers to ensure **'That enjoyment of the hobby by the many is not spoilt by the actions of the few'**  
This allows the **AFIS/AGO** on **VATSIM** to issue 'Advisory' or Safety calls to avoid 'collisions'.
- 2.7 **AIRPORT INFORMATION** is current detail about **the airfield and weather**, advising runway in use, circuit direction and height, QNH, QFE, Surface winds. etc..

- 2.8.a)** RW the **AFISO/AGOs**' radio equipment has a restricted range. Likewise on VATSIM, a Tower Controller will have a 'radar range' of 50nm, AFISO and Ground Controllers 20nm and an AGO 10nm. This is partly to replicate RW practice, but also to restrict bandwidth use on the internet.
- b)** On TeamSpeak, the CIX AFISO/AGO has no such restriction, especially if using **PlanG for visual reference**. Therefore, on TeamSpeak, the **AFISO/AGO** will adhere to VATSIM rules by **NOT** passing Airfield Information to any A/C until within the appropriate range. If you call beyond the appropriate range, you will be passed a 'reporting request', where you will receive your airfield and traffic information.
- 2.9.** Most **AGOs** will have a **VERY RESTRICTED VIEW** of the airfield. So if 2 A/C are dealing with a situation between themselves, (especially close to and in sight of each other on the ground), any intervention by him could make the situation worse. This is his judgement/decision.

### **3. How to fly in and out of an AFISO or AGO Airfield or strip.**

**3.1.** You need to think of the airfield as 4 connected areas:-

- a) The Ground**, the airfield;
- b) The Circuit**, surface to circuit height;
- c) The Overhead**, 2000ft down to circuit height;
- d) Overhead the Airfield**, 2300ft to around 3000ft QFE (more if needed).

**3.2 At ANY Airfield, VFR A/C can SELECT the runway they wish to use.**

- a)** You make a **REQUEST to a Tower Controller**, but you **INFORM an AFISO/AGO Controller of the Runway you wish to use**.
- b)** The **declared runway in use**, as part of the Airfield Information, will be the longest/best surface/best routes in and out/clear of as much built up areas as possible or any other 'hazards to flight' around the airfield.
- c)** If the **TAILWIND component** is more than **5kts** or the **CROSSWIND component** is more than **10kts**, a different runway will be declared '**Runway in use**', based on the Surface Wind. Therefore, at a multiple Runway (non tower) A/F, for your own safety, **ALWAYS assume ALL runways are ACTIVE**.

**3.3** Although it should be avoided, if possible, if there is a lot of radio traffic, the standard phraseology CAN be abbreviated. PROVIDED the information/intentions are still clear. In this situation, less use of air-time will increase general safety.

### **4. Some examples**

**4.1 AFISO runway departure and arrivals.**

Aircraft	AFISO	Notes
GBB turning final for Runway 24.	GBB Roger.	<b>REMEMBER, THIS IS NOT A CLEARANCE. It is up to you what you do next.</b> So always be aware of other traffic. Always keep the Controller informed of your intentions and/or actions, dependant on the traffic around you.
GTC Ready for departure Runway 14R.	GTC Runway 14R, take off at your discretion, surface wind calm, traffic is a 172 last reported turning final to land Runway 24.	
GTC holding 14R for the landing traffic.	GTC Roger.	
GBB final Runway 24 to land.	GBB Runway 24 land at your discretion, surface wind calm. Traffic is a PA28 (reported) holding 14R for departure.	
GBB landing 24 to vacate Charlie.	-	He lands.
GTC lining up 14R.	GTC Roger.	GBB vacates the runway.
GTC taking off runway 14R (departure to the South).	GTC Roger, surface wind calm.	RW this would be a 'Spot Wind' report from the A/F Anemometer.
GBB vacated, request taxi for fuel.	GTC report leaving the frequency break, break, GBB.....	

#### 4.2 Transiting overhead/through the ATZ.

Aircraft	AFISO/AGO	Notes
Goodwood Information. G-GATC, PA28 Shoreham to Bournemouth, Fontwell 2500ft on 1008 to transit East to West.	G-GATC Goodwood Information, 4 A/C in the ATZ, one departing (to the) North. QNH 1009, Report overhead.	If the AFISO has Westerly inbound or outbound traffic, he will advise them of the transiting A/C.
Visual the traffic, QNH 1009, to report overhead G-GATC.		When overhead, GTC will be asked to report leaving the frequency.

#### 4.3 The AGO, CANNOT 'advise', but only provide information and request reports from pilots, on the ground and in the air.

Aircraft	AGO	Notes
Starting, for departure to the	GTC Runway in use 24, report taxiing, no reported traffic.	2 <sup>nd</sup> call.

<b>South, G-GATC.</b>		
<b>Taxiing Runway 21, GTC.</b>	<b>GTC Roger, report lined up/departing Runway 21, traffic is a PA28 last reported in the Overhead for Runway 24.</b>	Could be a conflict for either/both A/C. A 'heads up' for both pilots.
<b>GTC (is) taking off (Runway) 21.</b>	<b>GTC Surface wind 220 at 7kts, report leaving the frequency.</b>	If the other A/C had reported 'descending dead side', this information would have been given to GTC when given the winds.
<b>Report leaving the frequency GTC.</b>	<b>GTC Bye, have a good flight.</b>	

**4.4** In the air, **BOTH AFISO & AGO** rely on reports from **all A/C within the ATZ**, in order to provide a service.

<b>Aircraft</b>	<b>AFISO/AGO</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Downwind 24, T&amp;G, GTC.</b>	<b>GTC Roger, no reported traffic.</b>	When on TeamSpeak, ANY non-CIX or non reported CIX traffic will be called 'UNKNOWN'  GTC should continue to report changes in flight of the UNKNOWN for as long as he could be a hazard to him, or is requested to do so by AFISO/AGO.
<b>Have traffic visual late downwind. Extending downwind to be No2. GTC.</b>	<b>GTC (thanks) that traffic not reported/is unknown. Break, break, All stations there is an UNKNOWN in the circuit, last reported late downwind Runway 24. End of Broadcast.</b>	
<b>The unknown is turning base, GTC.</b>	<b>GTC Roger.</b>	If the unknown is identified as a CIX Member, he should be contacted to join on TeamSpeak.
<b>GBB taking off Runway 24.</b>	<b>GBB surface wind calm, traffic is an unknown last reported turning base, Runway 24. Report leaving the frequency.</b>	Do NOT advertise on UNICOM/VATSIM there is a CIX AFISO/AGO service available. The service, at this time, MUST remain a service BY CIX members FOR CIX Members ONLY.

4.5 **Some situations at EGTD Dunsfold.** Look at the airfield data sheet, not a simple airfield to fly into/out of.

Aircraft	AGO	Notes
Dunsfold Radio, G-GATC, C172, inbound passing Midhurst, to land.	G-GATC, Dunsfold Radio, Runway in use 25, QNH1009, QFE 1004, circuit height 800ft, surface wind 270 at 04kts. No Overhead Joins. No reported traffic.	Dunsfold, under Gatwick C/L, NOT ABOVE 1500ft, restricted circuit and circuit height. No overhead joins. Special rules for use of runways.
QFE 1004, landing runway 07, straight in, to report final G-GATC.	GTC Roger.	His decision, 4kts and no REPORTED traffic, should be OK <b>THIS IS NOT A CLEARANCE</b> , only an acknowledgement of your transmission, IF GIVEN.
G-BB, Taxiing to Runway 25, for departure South VFR.	GBB Roger.	He had obviously started BEFORE we re-tuned.
Final runway 07 to land GTC.	GTC Traffic is a PA28 reported taxiing to depart Runway 25, surface wind 270 at 04kts.	OK, he does not intend a re-think. His decision. What <b>BOTH</b> pilots do is <b>THEIR</b> decision.
GBB. Holding short 25, for the inbound.	GBB Roger.	Not perfect RT, but intentions CLEAR.
GTC Landing 07, to vacate onto the hard-standing. Visual the PA28.	GTC Roger.	
GBB Lining up, have the 172.	GBB Roger, surface wind 270 at 04kts.	(They pass each other).
Taking off 25 GBB.	GBB Roger, report leaving the frequency. No reported traffic.	The AGO had to let them sort themselves out, as he could not see them.
Request parking information, GTC.	GTC. Parking is available to the left of the yellow Tiger-moth.	Note, parking information, not taxiing and parking instruction.
GTC thanks, taxiing to parking.	GTC. Roger, no reported traffic, report shutting down, welcome to Dunsfold.	AFISO/AGO will usually request 'report shutting down' so that they know that A/C no longer needs to be reported.
GBB. Leaving your frequency, going to Unicom 122.80, thanks, bye.	GBB, Roger, No reported traffic, bye, have a good flight.	

4.6 If you call in too far away.

Aircraft	AFISO/AGO	Notes
Goodwood Information, G-GATC, C172 Inbound, leaving Mayfield, VOR.	G-GATC Goodwood information, report Washington VRP.	If your first contact is 'out of range' you will receive no information.
G-GATC, Washington VRP.	GTC Airport information, Runway 14R LH joins in use, QFE 1002, surface winds calm. Traffic information, the circuit is busy with 5 A/C reported inbound, from various directions. Report 4 DME.	Obviously busy, with a fluid situation, so a further position report request as things may have changed by then.
Runway 14R, LH circuit, QFE 1002, Copy the traffic, GTC.	-	No reply from AFISO/AGO, as it could be misinterpreted as an acknowledgement of an instruction read-back.

This is a basic introduction to the phraseology used at an airfield with an AFISO or AGO service. If you would like to know more, you are welcome to have a look at the **CIX AFISO RT PRACTICAL TRAINING MANUAL** in the Air Traffic Services/ Training and Information section on the Forum.

The next section looks at how you communicate with other A/C when flying into/out of/over an airfield with no ATC of any description.

## 11 COMMUNICATIONS AT UNATTENDED AERODROMES: SAFETYCOM and UNICOM

1. **REAL WORLD.** If an unattended AIRFIELD HAS an allocated frequency (TWR/GND; TWR & GND or 'RADIO') AIRCRAFT should 'open-call' using the frequencies assigned to the AIRFIELD.
2. **RW** If the AIRFIELD has NO assigned frequency(ies) then AIRCRAFT should use **SAFETYCOM** – a standard frequency of 135.475 **IN THE UK**.
3. **ON VATSIM** 23.1 above should be observed (not often used in reality). But **SAFETYCOM** is replaced by **UNICOM, which is TEXT ONLY**. The phraseology used is common to both, although in practice messages on Unicom are often minimal & abbreviated. Partially because, being TEXT your Msgs. Will appear in the 'chat' windows of ALL local AIRCRAFT. (Usually the last 4 or 5 msgs. Can be seen).

If a group flight, you should all use the airfield frequency as long as, at least, one A/C monitors UNICOM in order to inform/invite other A/C to tune in.

Let us assume we are going from Popham to Shoreham, but plan to land at Compton Abbas, When we 'phoned them, before leaving Popham, there was a recorded message, "**Compton radio is off air today**". It has 2 runways, 26/08 & 03/21, Popham Radio is 122.7. The A/F is used frequently by training helicopters. So, which of the approaches should we use, after departing Popham (to the north west)? On **UNICOM** your callsign is automatically put in front of **ALL YOUR txt** messages.

**VOICE ('OPEN'CALL)ONLY; SAFETYCOM and/or UNICOM; UNICOM ONLY**

**WIND 250@10.QNH 1022**

a	<b>Compton traffic G-GATC 10 miles north west JOINING OVERHEAD, Compton Compton Trfc 10nm NW OH join</b>	<b>Not more than 10miles away, tune 122.7 /Unicom 122.80</b>
b	<b>(Compton) traffic G-GATC, Overhead, to land runway 26 ,(Compton) (Compton) Trfc, OH, to Land (LND) Rn26</b>	If it is OBVIOUS no other traffic, this is an optional TRANSMISSION
c	<b>(Compton) traffic G-GATC, Dead side descending (or descending dead side) for runway 26, (compton) (Compton) Trfc, ded sde 26</b>	As above; optional  NB ensure any abbreviations still clearly state your intentions.
d	<b>(Compton) traffic G-GATC, Downwind (right hand – if applicable), Runway 26,(compton) (Compton) Trfc, dnwnd (RH) 26</b>	Why only Right Hand? Why might we decide Rt.Hnd? if not specified. (where?)
e	<b>(Compton) traffic G-GATC, Base leg runway 26 (to land/T&amp;G/Go around) (Compton) Trfc, B(a)se (RH) 26, Ind/TG/GAR</b>	Again, whether or not you state full intentions, more than once, and when, will depend on the traffic situation at the time.

f	Compton traffic G-GATC, Final Runway 26 (to land),(Compton) (Compton) Trfc, Final, 26	Mandatory – always?
g	(later) Compton traffic G-GATC, Taxiing for runway 26 (departure to SE/Shoreham) (Compton) Trfc, txy Rnwy 26 dep SE > EGKA	Note: once you have opened communication on the A/F frequency, the A/F name can be dropped, but a good idea to use it every 5mins and at important points in the circuit.
h	Compton traffic G-GATC, Taking off/ departing, runway 26 Compton (Compton) Trfc, T/O Rn26	'mandatory'? – what do you think? - The 'un-announced' turning final?
i	(Compton) traffic G-GATC, (Runway 26) Departing to the SE. (Compton) Trfc, Trng SE>EGKA	Personally, if trfc about, I would include this one Especially if you think/know another A/C is near, but not 'talking'.

Why might we have been transmitting the above anyway, AND keeping a very sharp lookout?

j	G-GGSS, Helicopter inbound Compton, from the north, low level, to land at the Tower. Helio, from Nth, Low to land Compton (Tower)	Bit naughty, but at least we know about him! – This Time!
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On UNICOM it is allowed to abbreviate all messages, HOWEVER, bear in mind **who will NEED to read AND UNDERSTAND** them.

In my opinion the above is the **VERY MINIMUM** of abbreviation.

Read your PILOT CLIENT MANUAL, these days most of them have a 'quick text' facility – built in text messages, requiring a VERY short activation.

You may find that yours has the ability for you to 'construct' your own text messages.

If flying as a group into an un-manned airfield, by all means use the published frequency for the airfield, BUT ensure that **AT LEAST** one member monitors UNICOM so that any other traffic in the area can be informed that the group is on frequency X.

The CIX VFR CLUB hopes this document will help you to enjoy flying with CIX at ALL Airfields. If you need help, talk to me on TeamSpeak or PM me.

Neville Munro,  
Manager, CIX VFR CLUB Air Traffic Services.