

Avoiding Pilot Deviations

Pilot Deviations result from...

pilot actions that deviate from assigned headings and altitudes, instrument procedures, or when pilots penetrate controlled airspace or airspace subject to



Plan each flight

Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) without ATC clearance. **Ground deviations** include taxiing, taking off or landing without clearance or deviations from assigned taxi route or failing to hold short of an assigned clearance limit. Avoiding most airborne PDs is pretty easy. There are three steps:

1. Plan each flight — You may have flown the route dozens of time before but things change rapidly these days and TFRs can pop up with little notice. Take a few minutes before each flight to:

- ✓ **Confirm** that you have the latest data. That includes downloading current charts and TFR data for your tablet computer and/or on-board navigation system. If you're still flying with paper, **make sure** you have the necessary FAA Sectional and Terminal charts on board and **log** a briefing with Flight Service or DUATs just before takeoff. That will prove that you complied with your PIC responsibility to acquire all relevant information before the flight.
- ✓ **Consider** what types of airspace you'll be flying through, what you'll need to do to gain clearance for those areas and, what you'll do if clearance is not granted.
- ✓ **Request** flight following service or file IFR. This will ensure another set of eyes on your flight. The collision avoidance benefit is obvious but you'll also have real time information on TFRs.

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2. Talk and Squawk — Requesting flight following or filing IFR are the most effective ways to get help in avoiding pilot deviations. Controllers would much prefer talking with pilots than filling out pilot deviation forms.



Talk and Squawk

Flight following often makes the controller's job easier because they can better integrate VFR and IFR traffic. Controllers also have the latest TFR information including sporting event venues and emergency response areas. Here are some tips:

- ✓ **Make a note**— Note all altitude, heading, speed, and procedure assignments and clearances. Do this on a scratch pad or in your flight management system. Make the note; then read it back. That way you'll know you recorded the assignment correctly.
- ✓ **Read it back**— Read back clearances and instructions exactly as received together with your call sign.
- ✓ **Let George do it**— If you have an autopilot with altitude & heading hold capability why not use it to make sure you don't bust an assignment?
- ✓ **Sterile Cockpit**— If you're in a busy terminal environment or making a lot of altitude & heading changes you're too busy to deal in extraneous cockpit conversation. Make sure your passengers understand that you have to give 100% of your attention to flying
- ✓ **Have a Plan B**— VFR advisory service is dependent on controller work load so it's a good idea to have an alternate plan in case advisories are unavailable.

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3. Give yourself some room — Whether it's a TSO'd glass cockpit or a tablet-based navigation system, it seems everyone's flying with GPS these days. Never before have we had so much information available to assist us with our navigation chores. GPS is usually more precise than ATC radar and therein lies a problem. If you use GPS to fly right on the line of airspace you're trying to avoid; radar may show you inside that airspace. That will trigger a pilot deviation alert and you'll likely be called to account for your navigation. True—you may be able to prove you were not at fault but only if you can produce a track from



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your navigation system and besides; Who wants to meet an FAA inspector under those conditions? See below for some additional tips for PD free flying:

- ✓ **Horizontally**—Fly at least a mile outside any airspace you're trying to avoid. A moment's pre-occupation with a passenger question or changing a frequency can put you inside of a TFR boundary instead of safely along side. Why fly with that kind of pressure?
- ✓ **Vertically**—Fly at least 500 feet above or below airspace you're trying to avoid. By the way—wouldn't it be safer to be talking and squawking instead of trying to sneak under Class C airspace?
- ✓ **Timing**— If you know a TFR will become active at 0800 it's not a good idea to be operating there at 0755 and, similarly, don't plan on operating in a TFR area immediately after its scheduled closure. Always confirm the TFR has expired before operating in the airspace that was restricted.

How about on the ground?

Pilot deviations can and frequently do occur on the ground. Many Airborne PD avoidance strategies and tactics work on the ground as well. Here are a few suggestions for avoiding runway incursions:

- ✓ **Plan your route from chocks to chocks.** Consult an airport diagram before and during taxi operations.
- ✓ **Read back all clearances and instructions.** And make sure you understand what you've been cleared to do before taxiing. If there's any doubt—ask for clarification.
- ✓ **Ask for progressive taxi instructions.** This is an excellent way to make sure you're complying with your taxi clearance and it's especially useful at unfamiliar airports.
- ✓ **Sterile cockpit:** Obviously any cockpit conversation must be restricted to taxi operations when maneuvering on an airport.



Our GA Safety Community

Your Western-Pacific FAA Safety Team is a group of FAA employees and volunteers dedicated to improving General Aviation Safety. We invite you to join our safety community by practicing safety risk management and pursuing continuing education opportunities for aviators.

Please navigate to <http://www.FAASafety.gov> to explore a host of safety education opportunities.

- The best way to survive an accident is to not have one. The **WINGS - Pilot Proficiency Program** is designed to help pilots construct an educational curriculum suitable for their unique flight requirements. It's an excellent way to keep you flying at the top of your game. When you're at your best you have the knowledge & skills to cope with any flying challenge.

For more information contact your local
FAASTeam Program Managers
or
FAASTeam Representatives here:



<https://FAASfety.gov/FAASTApp/directory>



FAA
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