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# Ten Tips to Immediately Improve Your Radio Skills

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[IFR Checkride Reviewer](#)

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## Quote of the month

*"Talking and flying are mutually exclusive activities"*

- Hank Canterbury,  
Writer

Hit reply and send me your favorite quote.

## Did You Know?

The phrase "Any traffic in the area, please advise" is specifically

Thank you for taking the time to read this safety message.

Please keep in touch through my website: [www.cfidarren.com](http://www.cfidarren.com)

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Thanks for your continued support,  
Darren

## Ten Tips to Immediately Improve Your Radio Skills

I was recently talking to an FAA Inspector from the St Louis FSDO and he told me, "Communications is such a little understood subject that you could almost stand in front of [a group of pilots] and read the AIM to them and it would be news to 95% of the them." That really makes a flight instructor stop and take notice. Our Aeronautical Information Manual promotes good radio technique also, "Good phraseology enhances safety and is the mark of a professional pilot." (AIM 4-2-1c)

Since the radio is the essential safety link between you and ATC, I offer these ten tips to help you immediately improve your radio technique. At the bottom of this article are a few links to other resources to further help you. Let's begin...

- 1. Umm, ahhh, and...** Remove these from your radio phraseology. These are not in the AIM and add wasted time to the transmission. We've all heard pilots on the radio doing this and it sure sounds dumb. Jump into the smart crowd with me and transmit succinct, clear messages next time you push the red button.
- 2. This is...** "Tampa Tower, this is Southwest 1649..." Who cares? If you have a request make it. Better phraseology would give you this: "Tampa Tower, Southwest 1649, request." Get rid of the "this is" and "we are" and give the rest of us a few more seconds of silence.
- 3. Stick to the basics...** Remember the basics your instructor taught you? Who you are calling - who you are - where you are - what you want. Pretty simple but you hear a lot of pilots who don't get it right. Here's what it should sound like: "Springfield Ground, Skyhawk 44E, at the FBO, taxi for departure VFR westbound."
- 4. Airplanes don't have CBs** and they aren't chatrooms either. I don't

prohibited by the AIM.

know what it is about a Sunday afternoon near non-towered airports. It usually yields two pilots talking on unicom about the new tractor. These unicom/multicom frequencies, ground, and tower frequencies were never meant to be used in this way. There are air-to-air frequencies that ARE meant for brief exchanges of information. Airplanes can use 122.75 / 122.85. Helicopters use 123.025. Balloons & gliders use 123.3 / 123.5. Take your discussion, however short, to the appropriate frequency.

**5. Keep it short.** When making requests of ATC, keep it short with relevant information. The controller doesn't want your life story and neither do the other pilots listening. Enough said?

**6. Listen before speaking.** It's amazing how many times in a day of flying that I hear pilots & controllers talking all over each other. That leads to the inevitable "say again." Pilots can save a lot of time by listening before transmitting. When you think the controller is finished, give it another moment before responding. That will allow others to break in should there be an emergency, but even better, it gives you a moment to think before speaking.

**7. Think!** Before transmitting your message, pause a moment to think before speaking. No doubt you've heard a pilot get on the radio and transmit something which sounds profoundly stupid. For sure, don't join that club. Eliminate brain paralysis by thinking before pushing the transmit button.

**8. We want....** "Saint Pete Tower, Skyhawk 44E, we would like to use 35 right." Do you know what the controller is saying up there in his tower? He just said, "Who cares what he wants" under his breath. Want to sound like a professional and proficient pilot? Say it like this: "Saint Pete Tower, Skyhawk 44E, request 35 right."

**9. Say it correctly.** There is a proper way to say letters and numbers on the radio. There's even a proper way to state altitudes, headings, frequencies, airspeeds, and airways. Here's a rundown:

- Altitudes:
  - *five hundred*
  - *four thousand five hundred*
  - *one three thousand five hundred*
  - *Flight Level One Niner Zero*
- Airways: *Victor Twelve*
- Frequencies: *one two two point one*
- Headings: *three six zero*
- Airspeeds: *two five zero knots*

**10. Learn how to answer ATC.** This is an area where most pilots could use some improvement. And never, never use the phrase "With you..." which annoys the heck out of a small percentage of controllers. These are the ones who will stick it to you later. You can smile silently because these are the controllers with high blood pressure and will stroke out at a much younger age than you will. Click:

All instructions are meant to be executed immediately and as practical. A final thought before closing... Be a pilot, not a parrot. Repeat those

things which are mandatory. Use good judgment with the rest - sometimes "wilco" does the job. Happy flying...

## Pilot's Radio Communications Guide

This 70-page review guide is designed as a quick reference guide or radio communications training self study guide. This covers VFR & IFR radio communications. Build your confidence by knowing what to say and when. Designed to fit in your flight bag, size: 3.6" x 8.5" Price: \$14.95 (Free Shipping to US addresses). ISBN: 978-0-9823940-7-6



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## Planes nearly collide at California airport

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the near collision of a Southwest Airlines jet and a small private plane at Southern California's Bob Hope Airport.

Southwest's Flight 649, carrying 119 passengers and five crew members on board a Boeing 737-700, was landing at the airport's runway 8 on Monday while the Cessna 172, departing on runway 15, just cleared the jet.

The Cessna was performing a practice maneuver known as a "touch and go," in which the aircraft briefly lands before accelerating and going airborne again, the NTSB said.

Runways 8 and 15 intersect at the Burbank airport. The aircraft came within 200 feet of each other vertically and 10 feet laterally at the runway intersection, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. Nobody was injured, and weather conditions were clear.

## The Ultimate Checklist: Pilot's Rules of Thumb

The ultimate checklist that every pilot needs. Ten years in development, this is a product that pilots of all levels of experience can immediately use. This tool covers 30 normal and non-normal situations and has 9 special tools that you'll use on every flight. This high-quality plastic ruler/checklist measures approximately 3.75" x 9". Click the picture to see a larger picture of this tool or click the link for [more information](#). Price: \$3.99 (Free Shipping to US addresses).

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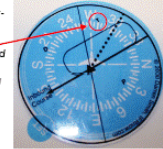
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ISBN:978-0-9823940-6-9

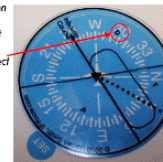
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### Examples:

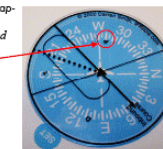
**Teardrop Entry**—Heading is 270° direct to the VOR to enter the hold. Point the arrow at 150° and Visi-Hold shows a teardrop entry and a recommended outbound heading of 300° after station passage.



**Direct Entry**—Heading is 270° direct to the PLUMY intersection to enter the hold. Point the arrow at 241° and Visi-Hold shows a Direct entry.



**Parallel Entry**—Heading is 270° direct to the VOR to enter the approach. Point the arrow at 049° and Visi-Hold shows a Parallel entry.



## Finally... DARPA looks to make a flying car

It is about time. After years of disappointment at the distinct lack of jetpacks and hover boards that our starry eyed childhoods promised us, the world might finally be ready to develop a real flying car, via the military.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) has asked the Pentagon for additional funds to help develop the Transformer (TX) vehicle for use with military personnel in combat situations. For those unfamiliar with DARPA, it is an office in the Department of Defense that is responsible for attempting to create pretty much everything you have ever seen in a sci-fi movie that has some military applications. Artificial Intelligence, cyborg limbs and laser guns are all listed in its 2011 budget. Seriously.

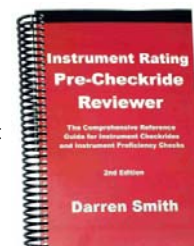
While there have been a few pretenders over the years, most of the previous "flying cars" were simply very small planes or gliders that either required a runway, or assistance from another vehicle to achieve flight, not to mention very specific instructions on how to fly the vehicle. The Transformer TX would be designed for vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL), and operated by anyone that can drive a car with no special training. Just like the cars in Blade Runner.

[Read the full story at KTNV](#)

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