



## Any Traffic Please Advise - Inbound Radio Calls

by Russell Still

If you happen to frequent the forums at AOPA or studentpilot.com, you've probably seen the long drawn-out diatribes about proper radio phraseology. In most cases, we have folks with maybe just little too much time on their hands. The forums have become a hotbed for discontent it seems.

As you know, in flight an occasional slang term slips in like "no joy" or "here's the flash" or "in the box". I'm going to be 100% honest with you and say that although these aren't correct, I have absolutely no problem with them. None whatsoever. Many times, the substitution of a well-known slang term actually improves the information exchange that must occur on the radio. But the folks in the forum discussions rant and rave on, sticking to the inerrable gospel of the AIM. It seems to have become a huge, well, contest about who can quote the FARAIM the best.

Remember that FARs are regulatory. They are mandatory and their strict interpretation should be used at all times. The AIM, however, is a suggestion of what the Washington-types want us to do in a perfect world. What does that mean? Pretty much it says, "We're not giving this the power of law, but we do think this is the best way to do it." Now if you ever get yourself into trouble and it turns out that you were operating contrary to the AIM, you can't say, "But I thought it was just a suggestion." Saying "no joy" instead of "negative traffic", though, isn't likely to get you into any trouble.

No one is hurt one bit if a pilot responds to the the controller "3217 in the box". And I doubt that anyone even cares except for the internet forum purists who love so much to quibble.

There IS one non-standard radio call that I do have a problem with. Imagine that you're sitting in the pattern with another aircraft, an inbound or outbound transitioning through every few minutes. On your radio you hear the guy call out, "Saratoga 873 Whiskey Mike, inbound from the north. Any traffic in the area please advise."

Any traffic please advise. Nothing is more sure to raise the ire of the radio purists than that phrase. And although not with their fervency, I do agree with them. Turns out the FAA agrees with them, too.

One of the changes that has appeared in the 2007 AIM is in section 4-1-9(g). Allow me to quote it for you:

*"Self-announce is a procedure whereby pilots broadcast their position or intended flight activity or ground operation on the designated CTAF . . . Pilots stating 'Traffic in the area please advise' is not a recognized Self-Announce Position and/or Intention phrase and should not be used under any condition."*

Although they need to work on their grammar a little, their message is clear. The habit of using this call has become a big enough problem that the FAA felt it needed to address it.

Asking traffic already in the airport area to advise YOU of their positions is totally backwards. The system works when each pilot volunteers that information. Inbound pilots need to LISTEN on the traffic frequency well before they enter the area. If they do that, they won't need to be advised of anything. They'll already know it.

When entering any airport area, controlled or uncontrolled, always volunteer your position and intentions. Tell them who you are, where you are, and what you're planning on doing. For the "where you are" part, give them your DDA. Distance, direction, and altitude.

So often, I'll hear pilots pipe in with an otherwise good self-announce, but they fail to say their altitude. That is a critical piece of information for other pilots. No one likes to trade paint. Please remember - distance, direction, and ALTITUDE.

Now, if you're approaching a towered airport, get the ATIS and give them your DDAA. Note that extra "A" there. Tell the tower your distance, direction, altitude, and the ATIS letter. Again, the altitude is important. Not only does it help other pilots in your vicinity know where to look for you, but it helps radar operators pick you out from the clutter of other 1200s.

A proper call when inbound to a towered field might sound like, "Graham Tower, Cessna 12345, 9 miles south, 2,800 with Delta. Landing."

Get all these components in your calls and you will become an active part in making airport airspaces safer places to fly. And banish "any traffic please advise" from your lexicon.

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