

AFIS

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Uncontrolled airfield

Upon obtaining your student rating, you will advance to **Aerodrome Flight Information Service (AFIS) training** and eventually qualify to provide AFIS within your assigned **virtual Area Control Center (vACC)**. This manual serves as a reference throughout your training and operational duties.

While this guide remains general, specific procedures may vary between **Flight Information Regions (FIRs)** and should be adapted accordingly.

Role of the AFIS Officer

Unlike air traffic controllers, **AFIS officers do not issue instructions or clearances** to aircraft. Instead, they provide **traffic information** and operational details to assist pilots in **maintaining situational awareness**.

One key phrase, **"Runway occupied,"** alerts ground traffic to remain clear of the runway until informed that it is available. Similarly, airborne aircraft notified of an **occupied runway** must ensure they do not interfere with another aircraft operating under a **"No reported traffic runway XX"** advisory. Pilots are responsible for maintaining **separation from active approach, departure, and missed approach paths**.

Objectives of This Guide

This guide outlines the responsibilities of an **AFIS officer**, including:

- **Providing accurate traffic information** to pilots.
- **Relaying IFR clearances** received from ATC units.
- **Understanding AFIS limitations** regarding clearances and instructions.
- **Ensuring effective AFIS service delivery** while operating within established regulatory boundaries.

Uncontrolled Airfields

An **uncontrolled airfield** is an aerodrome without **Air Traffic Control (ATC)**, where flight operations are managed through **AFIS or pilot self-announcements**.

Surrounding Airspace

Uncontrolled airfields are usually located in **Class G airspace**, where **both IFR and VFR flights** operate. If IFR procedures exist, a **Radio Mandatory Zone (RMZ)** is established around the aerodrome.

Within an **RMZ**:

- Pilots must adhere to **Class G airspace visibility and cloud clearance minima**.
- Continuous **radio monitoring and transmissions** on the RMZ frequency are required.
- The designated **aerodrome frequency** is used for all communications.

Where IFR traffic is present, **Class E airspace may extend down to 1,000 ft AGL**.

Uncontrolled airfields **without IFR procedures** generally follow a naming convention that combines the **nearest town name with "Radio"** (e.g., Bouarfa *Radio*). Exceptions are listed in **VFR charts and the Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP)**.

Aerodrome Layout and Traffic Patterns

Larger uncontrolled aerodromes resemble controlled airfields and typically feature:

- **Runways** (paved or grass).
- **Taxiways** connecting runways to aprons.
- **Designated parking areas** for aircraft.

Grass airstrips **may lack taxiways**, requiring pilots to specify **which side of the runway** they will use for taxiing.

Traffic Circuit Operations

The **traffic circuit** helps maintain orderly arrivals and departures. It follows a **rectangular flight pattern** at **1,000 ft AGL**, unless otherwise published.

A **standard circuit** consists of **left-hand turns**, although variations exist due to **noise abatement, terrain, or operational requirements**. These deviations are detailed in **VFR Approach Charts (VACs)**.

If no official circuit is published, pilots establish their own routing based on **safety considerations, minimum altitudes, and noise abatement procedures**.

Traffic Circuit Phases

English	French
Departure	Départ
Crosswind	Vent traversier
Downwind	Vent arrière
Base	Vent de base
Final	Finale

Runway Selection & Meteorological Conditions

Similar to controlled aerodromes, the **active runway** is chosen based on:

- **Wind direction and speed.**
- **Local regulations and procedures.**

The active runway is a **guideline** for pilots, who may select an alternative for operational or safety reasons. Most uncontrolled airfields **lack certified barometric pressure (QNH) equipment**. In such cases, pilots set **QNH manually** using the **aerodrome elevation (MSL)**.

Limitations of AFIS Authority

A **core principle of AFIS** is that **clearances and instructions are not issued** to aircraft. However, in some cases, **ground movement control** (e.g., taxiing and parking) may be delegated to AFIS officers by the aerodrome operator.

Communications Procedures

Initial Contact & Establishing Communication

VFR aircraft **arriving at or departing** an uncontrolled aerodrome must initiate radio contact on the AFIS frequency.

“ **Pilot:** Bouarfa Radio, CN-AKM.
AFIS: CN-AKM, Bouarfa Radio.

Once contact is established, the pilot states their **intentions**.

Arriving Traffic

After the initial call, an inbound aircraft transmits the following details:

- **Call sign**
- **Aircraft type**
- **Current position (distance and altitude)**
- **Intentions (e.g., landing, touch-and-go, etc.)**

In addition, pilots may also report:

- **Departure aerodrome**
- **Persons on board**

“ **Pilot:** CN-AKM, C172, VFR from Oujda 8 miles north of field, 2,200 feet, for landing.
AFIS: CN-AKM, runway 27, glider activity south of the field.

Pilots should continue **self-announcing their positions** during circuit operations. Callsigns may be abbreviated **only if first done by the ground station**.

Departing Traffic

Departing pilots must request **taxi instructions (if required)** and receive traffic information.

“ **Pilot:** CN-AKM, C172, VFR to Nador, apron, request taxi information.
AFIS: CN-AKM, runway 27.

If ground movement control is provided by the aerodrome operator, AFIS officers may issue taxi instructions.

“ **AFIS:** CN-AKM, runway 27 via eastern grass area / taxiway S.

Before takeoff, **wind conditions** are typically provided.

“ **AFIS:** Wind 240 degrees, 9 knots.

Traffic Awareness & Special Operations

Traffic Information

Since AFIS does not include radar services, **traffic information is provided based on visual observations and pilot reports**.

“ **Pilot:** CN-AKM, holding point runway 27, ready for departure.
AFIS: CN-AKM, traffic information, Cessna 172 departing runway 27.
Pilot: CN-AKM, traffic in sight, lining up runway 27.

Night VFR (NVFR) & Special Procedures

Night VFR (NVFR) requires:

- **A filed flight plan (if leaving the aerodrome vicinity).**
- **Use of "VFR Night" in all radio calls.**
- **Verification that the aerodrome is NVFR-approved.**

Pilot: *CN-AKM, C172, VFR Night to Melilla, at the apron, request taxi information.*

AFIS: *CN-AKM, runway 27.*

If transitioning into **Class E airspace**, the pilot must contact **ATC for further clearance**.

Emergency Procedures

Emergencies at uncontrolled aerodromes are managed similarly to controlled airports:

- **The aerodrome is closed to all traffic.**
- **Pilots are informed of the emergency.**
- **Once resolved, normal operations resume.**

IFR procedures

IFR flights are permitted at uncontrolled aerodromes if the following criteria are met:

1. **The aerodrome has published IFR approach procedures.**
2. **A Radio Mandatory Zone (RMZ) is established** in Class G airspace surrounding the aerodrome.

While AFIS officers **do not issue instructions or clearances**, the phrase **“Runway occupied”** indicates that pilots **on the ground** must remain clear of the runway **until notified that no traffic is reported using the runway**.

For **airborne traffic**, a pilot informed of an **occupied runway** must ensure they **do not interfere with an aircraft that has received a "No reported traffic runway XX" advisory**. Pilots are responsible for maintaining **separation from departure paths, approach paths, and missed approach routes**.

- **English is required** for all IFR communications.
- **Mixed IFR/VFR operations** increase complexity at IFR-capable uncontrolled aerodromes.
- **Pilots must establish communication** on the published frequency before entering the RMZ.
- **If no AFIS service is available, pilots must use UNICOM 122.800.**

“ **Pilot:** Plage Blanche Information, F-ABCD, C182, 7nm south of the airfield, 1,700 feet, crossing RMZ northbound.

While inside the **RMZ**, pilots must **continuously monitor** the published frequency. AFIS officers **do not need to acknowledge routine position reports**.

ATIS for IFR Aerodromes

The **Automatic Terminal Information Service (ATIS)** provides standard arrival and departure information for both **IFR and VFR flights**.

- ATIS messages are generated automatically via the **controller client**.
- Each FIR has **a specific ATIS provider** for uncontrolled IFR aerodromes.
- **Contact your FIR mentors** to set up ATIS at your assigned location.

Departing IFR Traffic

Below is a **flight strip example** for RAM1439, a AT72 Caravan departing Bouarfa (GMFB) to Casablanca (GMMN), following the route **OLMAG W255 FES R975 SADIC**.

Initial Clearance Request

“ **Pilot:** *Bouarfa Information, RAM1439, information Alpha, request IFR clearance.*
AFIS: *RAM1439, Bouarfa Information, check information Bravo, standby for clearance.*

Relaying IFR Clearances

Important Notes:

- AFIS stations **CANNOT issue IFR clearances**.
- AFIS must **request clearance from the responsible ATC unit** (Approach or Center).
- ATC clearance is **relayed verbatim** to the pilot.

Requesting IFR Clearance from ATC

“ **AFIS:** *Casablanca Radar, Bouarfa Information.*
ATC: *Go ahead.*
AFIS: *RAM1439 at Bouarfa requests IFR clearance to Casablanca via OLMAG.*
ATC: *RAM1439 is cleared to Casablanca aerodrome, visual departure, BRG W255 OLMAG flight planned route, climb FL170, squawk 3446, released.*
AFIS (Relay to Pilot): *RAM1439, Casablanca Radar clears you to Casablanca aerodrome, visual departure, BRG W255 OLMAG planned route, climb FL170, squawk 3446, depart not earlier than 40, not later than 55.*
ATC: *Readback correct.*

Relaying the Clearance to the Pilot

“ **AFIS:** *RAM1439, Bouarfa Information, clearance now available, advise ready to copy.*
Pilot: *RAM1439, ready to copy.*
AFIS: *RAM1439, Casablanca Radar clears you to Casablanca aerodrome, visual departure, BRG W255 OLMAG planned route, climb FL170, squawk 3446, depart not earlier than 40, not later than 55.*
Pilot: *Cleared to Casablanca, visual departure, BRG W255 OLMAG flight planned route, climb FL170, squawk 3446, depart not earlier than 40, not later than 55.*
AFIS: *Readback correct, startup approved, runway 27 via S.*
Pilot: *Startup approved, runway 27 via S.*

Vectored Departure (if no SID assigned)

“ **AFIS:** RAM1439, Casablanca Radar clears you to Casablanca, radar vectors OLMAG, flight planned route, fly runway heading, climb 5000 feet, squawk 3446, depart not earlier than 40, not later than 55.

Approaching IFR Traffic

Inbound IFR flights **follow a similar process**, requiring coordination between **ATC and AFIS**.

ATC to AFIS Handoff

- ATC **notifies AFIS** of **expected IFR traffic on final approach**.
- Once stabilized on **final approach**, ATC **transfers the aircraft to the AFIS frequency**.

“ **Pilot:** RAM1439, AT72, established ILS runway 27, 6,000 feet.
AFIS: RAM1439, wind 190 degrees, 4 knots, no further traffic / one VFR light on downwind.

Key Considerations for IFR Arrivals

- IFR traffic **does NOT have priority** over VFR flights.
- Inside the RMZ, **IFR pilots must follow "see and avoid" rules**, like VFR aircraft.
- **VFR flights are not required to give way** to IFR traffic but may choose to.
- **AFIS cannot issue landing clearances**—pilots must self-announce intentions.
- If necessary, **pilots may initiate a go-around** and coordinate a new approach with ATC.

AFIS Limitations at IFR Aerodromes

Task	Allowed?
Relay enroute clearances from ATC	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Provide traffic/weather information	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Approve startup & taxi	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Issue takeoff/landing clearances	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Issue direct routing to IFR aircraft	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Vector IFR traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> No

- **Uncontrolled IFR aerodromes require higher coordination** due to **mixed IFR/VFR operations**.

- AFIS stations can **relay ATC instructions** but **cannot control IFR traffic**.
- **Pilots must self-announce** and **maintain situational awareness** at all times.