

Delay techniques

VFR Holding

Air Traffic Control (ATC) may require VFR aircraft to **hold over a specific area** due to congestion or sequencing issues. The term "**ORBIT**" is used to instruct aircraft to circle a designated point until further notice. Pilots must remain in the orbit until cleared to continue.

ATC Holding Instructions Format:

“ [Aircraft Call Sign], ORBIT [Direction] OF [Location], [Turn Direction], [Expected Duration/Number of Orbits].

Example:

“ Cessna 45X, ORBIT EAST OF CITY BRIDGE, LEFT TURNS, EXPECT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS IN 5 MINUTES.

In this case, the aircraft must maintain left turns east of the **City Bridge** until ATC provides further instructions.

ATC Holding Instructions	English	French
N123X, orbit left.	Orbit left.	Orbitez à gauche.
N123X, orbit abeam threshold.	Orbit abeam threshold.	Orbitez au seuil de piste.
N123X, make a right 360.	Make a right three-sixty.	Effectuez un trois-six zéro à droite.

Remaining Outside Controlled Airspace

Before entering **Class D airspace**, VFR aircraft must establish communication with ATC. Due to traffic congestion, ATC may instruct the pilot to remain **outside the controlled airspace** until further notice.

ATC Instruction Example:

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[Aircraft Call Sign], REMAIN OUTSIDE CLASS D AIRSPACE, STANDBY.

Example:

“ Skyhawk 82B, REMAIN OUTSIDE CLASS D AIRSPACE, STANDBY.

The pilot must remain clear of Class D airspace and await further instructions from ATC.

ATC Instruction	English	French
Remain outside Class D airspace.	Remain outside Class D airspace.	Restez en dehors de l'espace aérien de classe D.

Delaying Techniques for VFR Aircraft

VFR aircraft generally operate at **lower speeds** compared to commercial traffic. To ensure efficient traffic flow, ATC may need to **create adequate spacing** between VFR and IFR arrivals. A **gap of 7 to 9 NM** is typically required between a slow VFR aircraft and faster IFR traffic on approach.

To optimize sequencing and minimize delays, ATC can employ several delaying techniques.

Orbits (360-Degree Turns)

Orbits are used to **keep VFR traffic within a confined area** while awaiting clearance to continue. These are particularly useful when delaying traffic near the airport without significantly affecting approach sequencing.

- A standard **360-degree turn** takes approximately **2 minutes** at a standard rate of **3° per second**.

Orbit Instructions	English	French
N123X, orbit left.	Orbit left.	Orbitez à gauche.
N123X, orbit abeam threshold.	Orbit abeam threshold.	Orbitez au seuil de piste.
N123X, make a right 360.	Make a right three-sixty.	Effectuez un trois-six zéro à droite.

Landing Sequence

If multiple aircraft are approaching the airfield, ATC may issue **landing sequence instructions** to VFR aircraft. The pilot is assigned a position in sequence and is responsible for maintaining safe spacing from the preceding aircraft.

Landing Sequence Instructions	English	French
N567P, number two, follow Boeing 737, 4 NM final, report traffic in sight.	Number two, follow Boeing 737, 4 NM final, report traffic in sight.	Numéro deux, suivez le Boeing 737, finale 4 NM, signalez le trafic en vue.
N432B, number three, follow Cessna 172 on downwind.	Number three, follow Cessna 172 on downwind.	Numéro trois, suivez le Cessna 172 en vent arrière.

Extended Downwind

Extending downwind is another delaying technique where a VFR aircraft remains on **downwind leg** longer than usual before turning onto base and final approach.

- **This technique is useful for spacing VFR aircraft between IFR arrivals.**
- **A longer downwind leg requires larger gaps between IFR traffic.**

Extended Downwind Instructions	English	French
N123B, extend downwind.	Extend downwind.	Prolongez vent arrière.
N567X, extend downwind, I will call your base.	Extend downwind, I will call your base.	Prolongez vent arrière, j'appellerai votre base.

Summary of ATC Delaying Techniques

Technique	Purpose	Example Instruction (English/French)
Orbits	Keep VFR traffic within a defined area.	<i>Cessna 34X, ORBIT RIGHT OVER HILLTOP. / Cessna 34X, ORBITEZ À DROITE AU-DESSUS DE LA COLLINE.</i>
Landing Sequence	Assign landing order and spacing.	<i>Cessna 34X, NUMBER TWO, FOLLOW 737, REPORT TRAFFIC IN SIGHT. / Cessna 34X, NUMÉRO DEUX, SUIVEZ 737, SIGNALEZ LE TRAFIC EN VUE.</i>
Extended Downwind	Delay VFR approach by increasing downwind length.	<i>Cessna 34X, EXTEND DOWNWIND, I WILL CALL YOUR BASE. / Cessna 34X, PROLONGEZ VENT ARRIÈRE, J'APPELLERAI VOTRE BASE.</i>

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