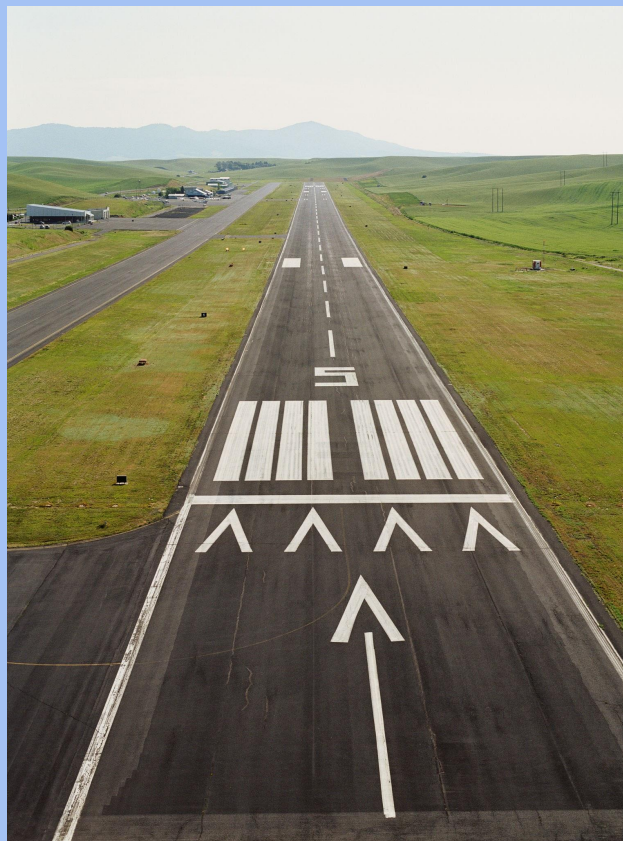


Visual Approaches



Visual Approaches

An approach is the flight path an airplane takes to transition from the enroute stage of flight to the landing stage.

A Visual Approach allows a pilot to navigate to the airport using visual references, rather than an instrument landing procedure.

Visual Approaches

In this lesson we will cover Visual Approaches; when they are appropriate, the benefits, requirements, and the responsibilities of both the pilot and the controller.

We will also give examples of the phraseology used for each type of approach and how it will differ depending on whether the airport of intended landing is controlled or uncontrolled.

Lastly, we will discuss the things to be aware, and cautious of, when executing a visual approach.

When might you execute Visual Approach?

Although you may be on an IFR flight plan, this doesn't necessarily mean your flight will conclude with an instrument approach.

When might you execute Visual Approach?

Although the enroute portion of your flight may be in Class A airspace, or you are flying below Class A airspace in instrument conditions, your destination airport is actually in VFR Conditions. Or,

You may flying be in VFR conditions, however on an Instrument Flight Plan for separation purposes. But again, your destination airport is actually in VFR conditions.

In either of these situations your flight may terminate with a visual approach.

Visual Approaches

Controllers may initiate, or pilots may request, a visual approach even when being vectored for an instrument approach when the pilot reports:

The airport or runway in sight at airports with an operating control tower, or

The airport in sight at airports without an operating control tower.

Visual Approaches

Requirements:

- The reported weather at the airport must be at least 1,000 foot ceiling and visibility at least 3 miles.
- The aircraft must remain clear of clouds
- Must be cleared for Visual Approach by ATC.
- The pilot must have and maintain visual contact with the airport or the aircraft they are instructed to follow (more on that later).

Visual Approaches

Benefits:

Visual approaches help to expedite the flow of traffic for both the pilot and the controller as aircraft are proceeding on a more direct route to the airport as opposed to flying a longer instrument procedure. Pilots may use navigational aids and published procedures to aid in alignment with the runway.

Visual Approaches

However:

Pilots may use navigational aids and published procedures to aid in alignment with the runway while on a visual approach.

Visual Approaches

Regardless if you are landing at an airport with a tower or an uncontrolled airport, the approach clearance will be issued by the approach controller prior to communications transfer to the tower or CTAF. The approach controller may be the Class B or C Approach Controller, or a Center Controller if the airport is not within Class B or C airspace.

Visual Approaches

Weather at the Destination Airport

The Approach Controller will need to ensure you have the current weather at the airport of intended landing.

Visual Approaches

Scenario 1: Landing at an uncontrolled airport.

Controller:

“Skyhawk 425NX, advise when you have the current weather and NOTAMs at the Platteville airport and say requested approach..

Pilot:

“Chicago Center, Skyhawk 425NX has the current weather at PVB and is requesting a visual approach.”

Visual Approaches

Scenario 1: Landing at an uncontrolled airport.

Controller:

“Skyhawk 425NX, roger. Report the PVB airport in sight.

Pilot:

“Chicago Center, Skyhawk 425NX has the PVB airport in sight.”

Visual Approaches

Scenario 1: Landing at an uncontrolled airport.

Controller:

“Skyhawk 425NX, cleared visual approach PVB airport.

Cancel IFR this frequency.

If unable, forward downtime through Flight Service.

Change to advisory frequency approved.”

Note:

At an uncontrolled airport, when you are transferred to advisory frequency your radar service is automatically terminated.

Visual Approaches

Scenario 2: Landing at a controlled airport.

Controller:

“Skyhawk 425NX, advise when you have information Alpha at Dubuque and report the field in sight for the visual approach runway 27.”

Pilot:

“Skyhawk 425NX has information Alpha, will report DBQ in sight for the visual approach runway 27.

Visual Approaches

Scenario 2: Landing at a controlled airport.

Pilot:

“Chicago Center, Skyhawk 425NX has the Dubuque Airport in sight.”

Controller:

“Skyhawk 425NX, cleared visual approach runway 27.
Radar service terminated, contact Dubuque Tower 119.5.”

Visual Approaches

You may also be cleared for a visual approach when you have an preceding aircraft in site, even if you do not have not reported the airport in site.

Visual Approaches

Scenario 3: Following a preceding aircraft

Controller:

“Skyhawk 51JA, traffic 12 o’clock 2 miles, 500 feet below, a Baron landing runway 27 DBQ.”

Pilot:

“Skyhawk 51JA has the Baron in sight.”

Visual Approaches

Scenario 3: Following a preceding aircraft

Controller:

“Skyhawk 51JA, cleared visual approach runway 27, follow the Baron.

Pilot:

“Skyhawk 51JA, cleared visual approach runway 27, will follow the Baron.”

Visual Approaches

Scenario 3: Following a preceding aircraft

Pilot Responsibilities:

- You must keep the preceding aircraft in site at all times.
- Maintain a safe landing interval behind the preceding aircraft.
- You are responsible for avoiding wake turbulence.
- Remain clear of clouds.

Visual Approaches

Scenario 3: Following a preceding aircraft

Advise ATC immediately if you lose visual contact with the aircraft you were instructed to follow.

This can happen, especially when the preceding aircraft is below you and gets lost in the ground clutter.

Visual Approaches

Pilot Responsibilities:

Also Advise ATC immediately if you cannot stay clear of clouds or must execute a go around.

There is no standard missed approach or go around procedure for a visual approach.

In the event you need to go around, at an airport with a control tower, the controller will issue instructions.

Visual Approaches

Pilot Responsibilities:

If you go around, you are responsible for terrain and obstruction clearance until reaching an ATC assigned altitude if issued.

Visual Approaches

Note 1:

At a controlled airport the Approach Controller will specify runway in use. The runway is not specified at an uncontrolled airport. ATC does not control the airport surface at an uncontrolled airport, therefore runway choice is the responsibility of the pilot.

Visual Approaches

Note 2:

If you are on an instrument approach and report the field in sight, the controller will clear you for the visual approach.

Visual Approaches

Note 3:

When issued a Visual Approach clearance, the pilot must make a normal descent to landing, and adhere to the standard traffic pattern for that airport and runway.

Visual Approaches

References:

FAR/AIM 5-4-23

7110.65BB, Section 4. Approaches, 7-4-1 Visual Approaches

Questions?

