

FROM THE TOWER

Hello and welcome to August 2010 edition of 'From the Tower', Bankstown Airport's Air Traffic Control news circular. The aim of From the Tower is to provide you, the Bankstown aviation community, with a regular source of news and information from an Air Traffic Control perspective. It is also aimed at keeping you informed of relevant and important events happening in and around the aerodrome, and to be a forum to discuss procedural topics focussed on operations at Bankstown.

Well it appears we have survived the transition from GAAP to Class D, with my hairline only receding slightly and fading to a touch of grey. Congratulations and thanks to everyone who helped in making the process run smoothly and safely. It is almost 3 months since the transition and the General Aviation community should be proud of the attitude, airmanship and compliance with procedures which has helped deliver a safe outcome for all.

In this edition I would like to discuss the following topics relevant to current operations at Bankstown.

- The manoeuvring area – including pilot / controller responsibilities
- Visual Approach (VSA)
- Simulated circuit emergencies
- Pilot information nights conducted in the Sydney Terminal Control Unit (TCU)
- Control Zone (CTR) status – VMC / NON-VMC
- IFR operations – explanation of new procedures, and their implications for Air Traffic Control (ATC)

Manoeuvring Area

Separation on the Taxiway system is a joint pilot, controller responsibility. This is not something new. The primary outcome expected of Surface Movement, or Ground, Control in our environment is to reduce runway incursions. Taxi clearances are designed to contain sufficient instruction to assist pilots to follow correct taxi routes, to avoid collisions and to minimise the potential for runway incursions. This does not imply that pilots are not expected to contribute to this process through diligent lookout and management – as was the case prior to June 3rd 2010.

The only significant difference in the implementation of SMC is that you need a clearance to operate on the manoeuvring area. Simple.

ATC: *'Report approaching the manoeuvring area for taxi clearance.'*

This instruction is commonly used at Bankstown for one main reason – many of the taxiways are out of view of the Ground controller, and these taxiways do not require a clearance to operate on. For us to effectively manage the manoeuvring area we only need to know about aircraft that are:

- vacating the runways directly onto the manoeuvring area, or
- aircraft approaching the manoeuvring area for departure or repositioning.

Aircraft are free to move on the movement area at their own discretion.

For example, an aircraft taxiing from Schofields for departure only needs to contact ground when approaching taxiway Kilo from taxiway Uniform One.

Pilot: *'Bankstown Ground, PIE, received Alpha, on taxiway Uniform One, request taxi clearance for departure.'*

Aircraft are required to take the shortest route to a specified holding point. If the ground controller wants you to take an alternate route and/or give way to other aircraft a more detailed clearance will be issued.

If you are unsure of your responsibilities or of the clearance given, ask the Ground controller for clarification.

Visual approach

A detailed explanation of the requirements for being issued with, and conducting, a Visual Approach can be found in AIP ENR.

A common question forwarded to the tower is why am I issued a Visual Approach when arriving for runway 29, but not for runway 11?

Hopefully these examples will help to explain why (both are VFR flights).

Example 1

Pilot: *'Bankstown Tower, ABC, C152, Prospect, 1500, received Bravo inbound, request clearance.'*

ATC: *'ABC, Bankstown Tower, join downwind runway 29R, maintain 1500.'*

Example 2

Pilot: *'Bankstown Tower, ABC, C152, Prospect, 1500, received Charlie inbound, request clearance.'*

ATC: *'ABC, Bankstown Tower, join final runway 11L, report established at 3 miles.'*

Example 1 is a clearance you may be issued with when arriving from Prospect, in VMC, for runway 29. Note the tower has issued a level restriction to ABC – maintain 1500. In this case ABC can only descend once cleared Visual Approach.

In example 2 ABC is arriving from Prospect, in VMC, for runway 11. No level instruction has been issued in the clearance, therefore ABC only needs to comply with the ERSA CTR entry requirements:

ERSA: *'Runway 11 enter CTR at 1000'.*

In this case ABC can descend as required without being issued a Visual Approach, as an altitude restriction was not issued.

Simulated circuit emergencies

Pilot: *'ABC, request practice engine failure on upwind.'*

This is a daily request encountered in the training circuit at Bankstown, and is a valuable training tool for instructors and their students. Prior to June 3rd 2010 all that was required from the controller was an acknowledgement of the request.

ATC: *'ABC roger'*

However, post June 3rd all non-standard operations in the circuit need to be granted approval from ATC. This includes practice engine failures and glide approaches. When operating in the circuit please ensure you request ATC approval to conduct non-standard operations. This can be issued on a one by one basis, or traffic permitting as a blanket clearance for a specified period of time.

Pilot information nights

Airservices Australia holds monthly pilot information nights to increase awareness of the air traffic system and to show how pilot activities, decisions and operations can impact it. The sessions promote safe flying and encourage pilots and air traffic services employees to engage and communicate with each other.

The night is held in the Sydney Terminal Control Unit (TCU), which is located in the building which adjoins the old Sydney Control Tower on General Holmes Drive.

The presentation includes:

- a visit to the ATC operations room and simulator to see the air traffic control traffic management system (TAAATS)
- presentations on critical safety issues including runway safety and violations of controlled airspace (VCAs) and pilot briefing and SARTIME management.

Further information can found on the Airservices Australia website by using the following link:

<http://www.airservices.gov.au/projectsservices/industryforums/pilotinfo/default.asp>

Control Zone status

You may have noticed that the term Restricted VFR is no longer used at Bankstown, or for that matter at any other aerodrome around the country. The status of the control zone is now determined to be either VMC or NON-VMC.

The pilot in command is responsible for assessing the weather information provided on the ATIS and determining whether conditions are VMC or NON-VMC. If conditions are NON-VMC, the pilot in command can expect to be denied a VFR clearance to enter the CTR.

What are the options?

Special VFR clearances are designed to facilitate arrival for VFR flights to an aerodrome at which conditions are NON-VMC. Separation requirements for Special VFR flights differ depending on the reason for requiring Special VFR.

For example, an aircraft inbound to the field where the cloud base is BKN at 1500' and visibility >10kms will require a Special VFR clearance due low cloud. This flight must be separated from any IFR flight.

An aircraft inbound to the field where the cloud base is BKN 2200' and visibility 4000m will require a Special VFR clearance due low visibility. This flight must be separated from all IFR flights and all other Special VFR flights.

When requesting a Special VFR clearance be sure to advise the tower of the reason for the request – either due low cloud or poor visibility. This request must be then coordinated through Bankstown Tower with the Sydney TCU, as your Special VFR request is now required to be separated with all IFR flights operating in the Sydney Class C airspace volume. The service provided by the tower relies on the accuracy of your request.

Meteorological minima relevant to Class D airspace and which define the CTR status can be found in AIP ENR.

IFR operations

VFR Departure

- May be requested by the pilot in command (but not offered by ATC) in VMC (day or night) and is valid for Class D and Class C;
- The IFR flight plan remains current and the IFR SARWATCH remains valid;
- A VFR Departure is not separated from other VFR or IFR traffic and the pilot must request AND be granted resumption of IFR status in Class C, D and E airspace;
- When entering Class G airspace the pilot can revert to IFR at own discretion and notify ATC;
- The pilot is responsible for terrain avoidance.

Visual Departure

- May be requested by the pilot and conducted into Class G or Class C airspace by day only. ATC may direct a Visual departure but there are a number of strict parameters. The procedure was designed to facilitate the movement of an IFR flight where for whatever reason the pilot could not fly the instrument departure or that ATC did not want the pilot to fly the instrument departure;
- The flight retains full IFR status and receives a full IFR service;
- The pilot is responsible for terrain avoidance and this is designated by the use of the phrase "visual".

Pilot: *'Bankstown Tower, ABC, IFR Metro, Prospect, 1500, received delta, visual, inbound.'*

ATC: *'ABC, Bankstown Tower, join downwind 29R, maintain 1500 visual.'*

When issuing a level restriction below the LSALT to an IFR aircraft, ATC must include the word visual. This transfers the responsibility for terrain avoidance to the pilot. The word visual is a required readback. The pilot in command of an IFR aircraft is also required to advise tower of in-flight conditions on first contact.

Finally...

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