



ATC Clearances

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The ATC system cannot function without ATC clearances.

LEARN MORE

Controllers deal with clearances on a daily basis, and your ability to master these procedures and effectively issue the appropriate clearance will produce a safe and orderly flow of air traffic.



Purpose

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This lesson provides you with the purpose of and the different types of ATC clearances, including the appropriate sequence and pilot responsibility for compliance.



Objectives

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In this lesson, you will identify:

1. The purpose of an ATC clearance
2. The pilot's responsibility for compliance with an ATC clearance
3. ATC clearance items and their sequence
4. Clearance prefixes and their use
5. Types of ATC clearances

You will meet the objectives in accordance with the following references:

- FAA Order JO 7110.65, Air Traffic Control
- Federal Aviation Regulations Part 91.123



FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION AIR TRAFFIC BASICS | Lesson 31: ATC Clearances

ALL LESSONS FRAME: 4

ATC Clearances

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LEARN MORE

An ATC clearance is an authorization by air traffic control for:

- The purpose of preventing collision between known aircraft
- An aircraft to proceed under specified traffic conditions within controlled airspace

Example: “SOUTHWEST FIVE TEN, CLEARED VISUAL APPROACH.”

Example: “DELTA ONE, RUNWAY ONE EIGHT, CLEARED TO LAND.”

All aircraft proceeding under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) must obtain an ATC clearance.

Reference: JO 7110.65, Glossary

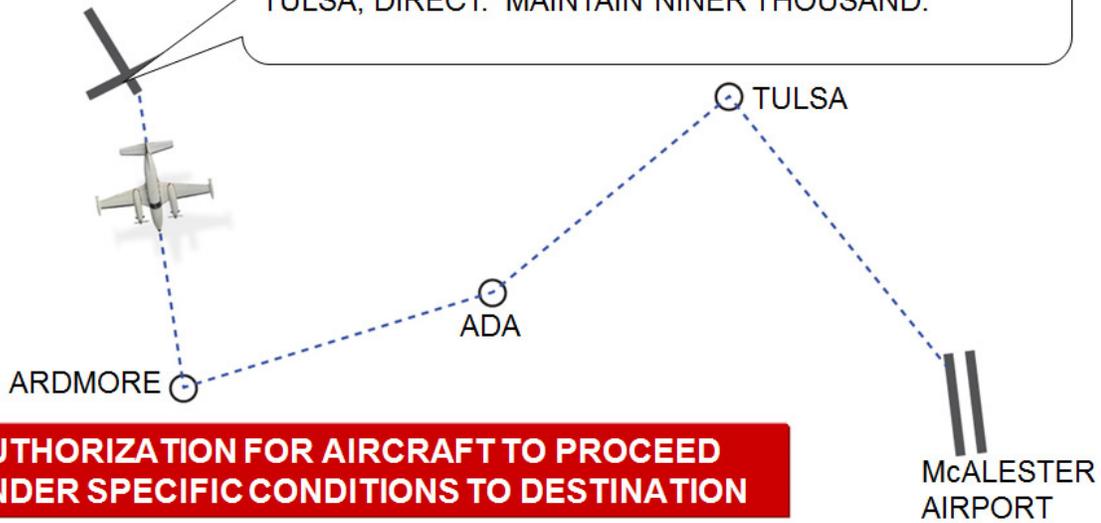


ATC Clearances

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“NOVEMBER EIGHT GOLF, CLEARED TO McALESTER AIRPORT VIA DIRECT ARDMORE, DIRECT ADA, DIRECT TULSA, DIRECT. MAINTAIN NINER THOUSAND.”



JO 7110.65, Glossary



ATC Clearances

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ATC Instructions

ATC instructions are directives issued by air traffic control for the purpose of requiring a pilot to take specific action.

Example: "TURN LEFT HEADING TWO FIVE ZERO."
"GO AROUND."
"CLEAR THE RUNWAY."

ATC clearances generally include specific instructions.

Example: "CLEARED TO WILL ROGERS AIRPORT VIA DEPART NORTH, DIRECT ARDMORE VICTOR SEVENTEEN, MAINTAIN EIGHT THOUSAND. REPORT LEAVING FOUR THOUSAND."

Expeditious clearance compliance:

- Use the word "immediately" only when expeditious compliance is required to avoid an imminent situation.
- Use the word "expedite" only when prompt compliance is required to avoid the development of an imminent situation.

JO 7110.65, Glossary



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ATC Clearances

"LET'S FLY OVER THE LAKE!"

ASSIGNED ROUTE

Pilot Responsibility and Compliance

LEARN MORE

The pilot-in-command of an aircraft may not deviate from the provisions of an air traffic clearance:

- Unless an amended clearance has been obtained
- Except in an emergency
- In response to a TCAS resolution advisory

NOTE: Amended clearances will be discussed later in this lesson.

ATC instructions also require pilot compliance.

Pilot operating on an IFR flight plan, landing at an airport with no functioning control tower

- Pilot is responsible for canceling IFR flight plan:
 - With AFSS
 - or
 - Through other means of direct communication with ATC (e.g., radio, telephone)

Pilot operating on an IFR flight plan at an airport with a functioning control tower is not required to cancel IFR.

- Flight plan is automatically closed upon landing.

References:

- JO 7110.65, Glossary
- FAR, 91.123



ATC Clearance Items

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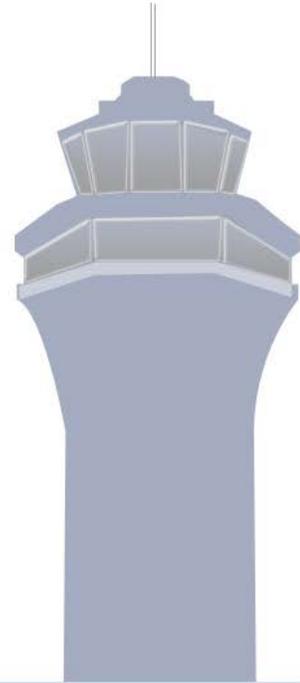
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Clearances

Clearances are issued based on pilot request, ATC needs, and the prevailing conditions.

- As many as nine clearance items may be used.

JO 7110.65, Chap. 4





ATC Clearance Items

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CLEARANCE ITEMS

Issue the nine clearance items as appropriate, in the order listed below:

1. Aircraft Identification
2. Clearance Limit
3. Standard Instrument Departure (SID)
4. Route of flight
5. Altitude data in order flown
6. Mach number, if applicable
7. Holding instructions
8. Any special instructions
9. Frequency and beacon code information

- Aircraft identification
 - The call sign of the aircraft is always included in any clearance.
- Clearance limit
 - The destination airport or a short-range clearance to a fix en route





ATC Clearance Items

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- Standard Instrument Departure (SID) procedure
 - When a SID is not established for the departure route to be flown, or the pilot has indicated "No SID"
 - Assign a Preferential Departure Route (PDR) or the route filed
- Route of flight
 - Consistent with the altitude stratum of the flight
- Altitude data in order flown
- Mach number, if applicable
- Holding instructions
- Special information
 - Special information may be associated with any of the other items: release times, delay information, when to expect higher, etc.
- Frequency and beacon code information

JO 7110.65, Chap. 4



FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

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Clearance Prefixes

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“NOVEMBER TWO, NOVEMBER ONE. ATC CLEARS NOVEMBER TWO AS FILED.”

“NOVEMBER ONE, ATC CLEARS NOVEMBER TWO AS FILED.”

USE “ATC” PREFIX THROUGH NON-ATC FACILITIES

LEARN MORE

Use prefixes when relaying clearances, information, or requests through non-ATC facilities:

- Dispatcher
- Airport operator
- Another aircraft

There are three types of prefixes:

- “ATC CLEARS” (clearance)
- “ATC ADVISES” (information)
- “ATC REQUESTS” (request)

Omit ATC prefix when issuing:

- Directly to aircraft
- To an ATC facility (including an AFSS)

AFSS shall prefix a clearance with appropriate phrase:

- “ATC CLEARS”
- “ATC ADVISES”
- “ATC REQUESTS”

Relay clearances from another controller verbatim.

Reference: JO 7110.65, Chap. 4



Types of ATC Clearances

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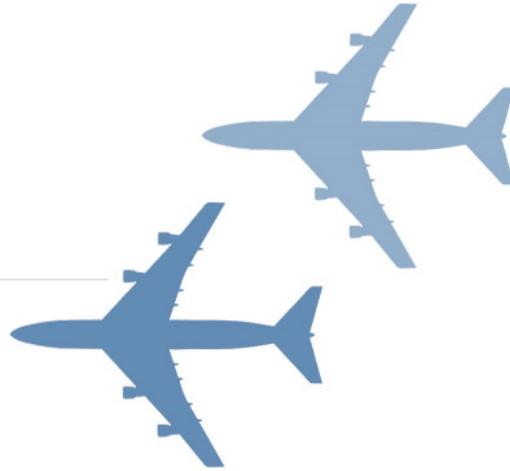
Clearance Types

There are many types of ATC clearances. Most include specific ATC instructions for the pilot to follow.

In this lesson, we will discuss nine types of ATC clearances:

- Amended
- Departure
- Taxi
- Takeoff
- Approach
- Landing
- Through
- Cruise
- Altitude Reservation

JO 7110.65, Chaps. 3, 4



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Types of ATC Clearances

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1 "DELTA TWENTY NINE, AMENDED CLEARANCE."

2 "DELTA TWENTY NINE GO AHEAD."

3 "DELTA TWENTY NINE, CHANGE VICTOR SIX MEMPHIS TO READ VICTOR SIX PIONEER, VICTOR TEN MEMPHIS."

4 "DELTA TWENTY NINE ROGER, VICTOR SIX PIONEER, VICTOR TEN MEMPHIS."

Amended Clearance

LEARN MORE

Amendments to previously issued clearances occur frequently.

Route and/or altitude changes are the primary amended clearances.

Common reasons for amended clearances include:

- Pilot request
 - Pilots may request:
 - ♦ A different clearance from that which has been issued
 - ♦ Clarification or amendment, as appropriate, any time a clearance is not fully understood or is considered unacceptable because of safety/aircraft capabilities
- Separation

Reference: JO 7110.65, Chap. 4

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Types of ATC Clearances

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“LEARJET OSCAR KILO JULIET DELTA MIKE, CLEARED TO TULSA AIRPORT VIA VICTOR FOURTEEN, CLIMB AND MAINTAIN EIGHT THOUSAND.”

“LEARJET JULIET DELTA MIKE ROGER, CLEARED...”

Departure Clearance

LEARN MORE

A departure clearance is authorization for a pilot to proceed from the point of departure to the point of destination under specific conditions.

- This is generally the initial clearance.

Include the following items in IFR Departure Clearances:

- Aircraft identification
- Airport of departure
 - When clearance is to be relayed to aircraft by AFSS or non-ATC facility

Clearance limit

- Normally the destination airport
 - Air Force One is cleared to “destination as filed” (do not state the destination)

Reference: JO 7110.65, Chap. 4



Types of ATC Clearances

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Departure Clearance

1. Departure procedures:

- Departure procedure or departure instructions may be issued in conjunction with a SID, or alone if no SID is available.
- To aircraft at airports outside of controlled airspace:
 - Do not issue departure instructions.
 - Issue heading/azimuth to apply only in controlled airspace.

2. Route of flight

3. Altitude

4. Departure frequency and transponder code

JO 7110.65, Chap. 4



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Types of ATC Clearances

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“EAGLE FLIGHT SEVENTY FIVE, RUNWAY TREE FOUR, TAXI VIA ALPHA.”

“EAGLE FLIGHT SEVENTY FIVE ROGER, TAXI TO THREE FOUR VIA ALPHA.”

Taxi Clearance

LEARN MORE

Taxi clearances are instructions provided by ATC for the route aircraft/vehicles are to follow while on the movement area of an airport.

- Movement on a nonmovement area is the responsibility of the pilot, the aircraft operator, or the aircraft company.

Reference: JO 7110.65, Chap. 3

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Types of ATC Clearances

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“LEARJET SIX FIVE ALPHA, RUNWAY TWO EIGHT LEFT, CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF.”

“LEARJET SIX FIVE ALPHA, CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF.”

Takeoff Clearance

LEARN MORE

A Takeoff clearance is issued to authorize the pilot to depart the airport.

- Clearance to take off is preceded by the runway number.
- Do not use the term “takeoff” for any other purpose.

Reference: JO 7110.65, Chap. 3

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Types of ATC Clearances

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Approach Clearance

LEARN MORE

Approach clearances authorize aircraft to execute an instrument approach procedure to a specific airport.

Pilots must follow the entire approach procedure, unless:

- They are cleared for a straight-in approach
- The pilot has visual contact with the ground, and upon pilot request, may be cleared for a contact approach (if weather conditions permit)
- The weather conditions are VFR at the airport. The pilot may then be cleared for a visual approach or may elect to cancel their IFR flight plan

Reference: JO 7110.65, Chap. 4



Types of ATC Clearances

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Landing Clearance

LEARN MORE

A Landing clearance is authorization for an aircraft to land. It is predicated on known traffic and known physical airport conditions.

Reference: JO 7110.65, Chap. 3

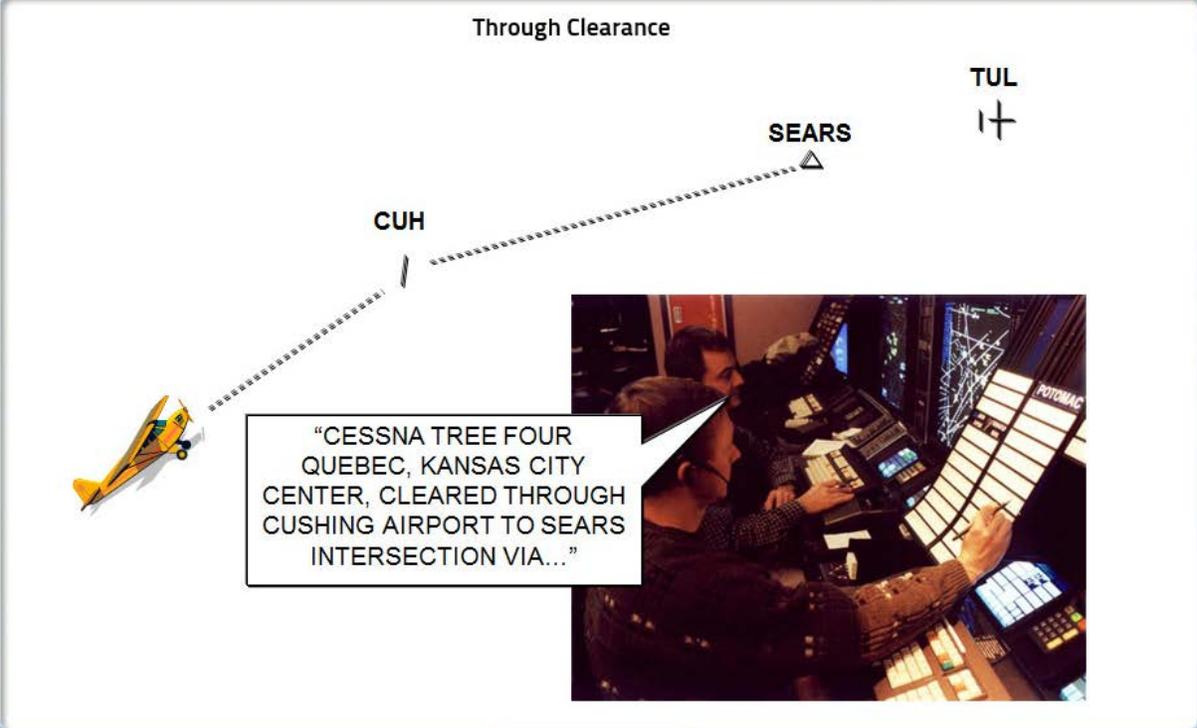
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Types of ATC Clearances

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Through Clearance



“CESSNA TREE FOUR QUEBEC, KANSAS CITY CENTER, CLEARED THROUGH CUSHING AIRPORT TO SEARS INTERSECTION VIA...”

LEARN MORE

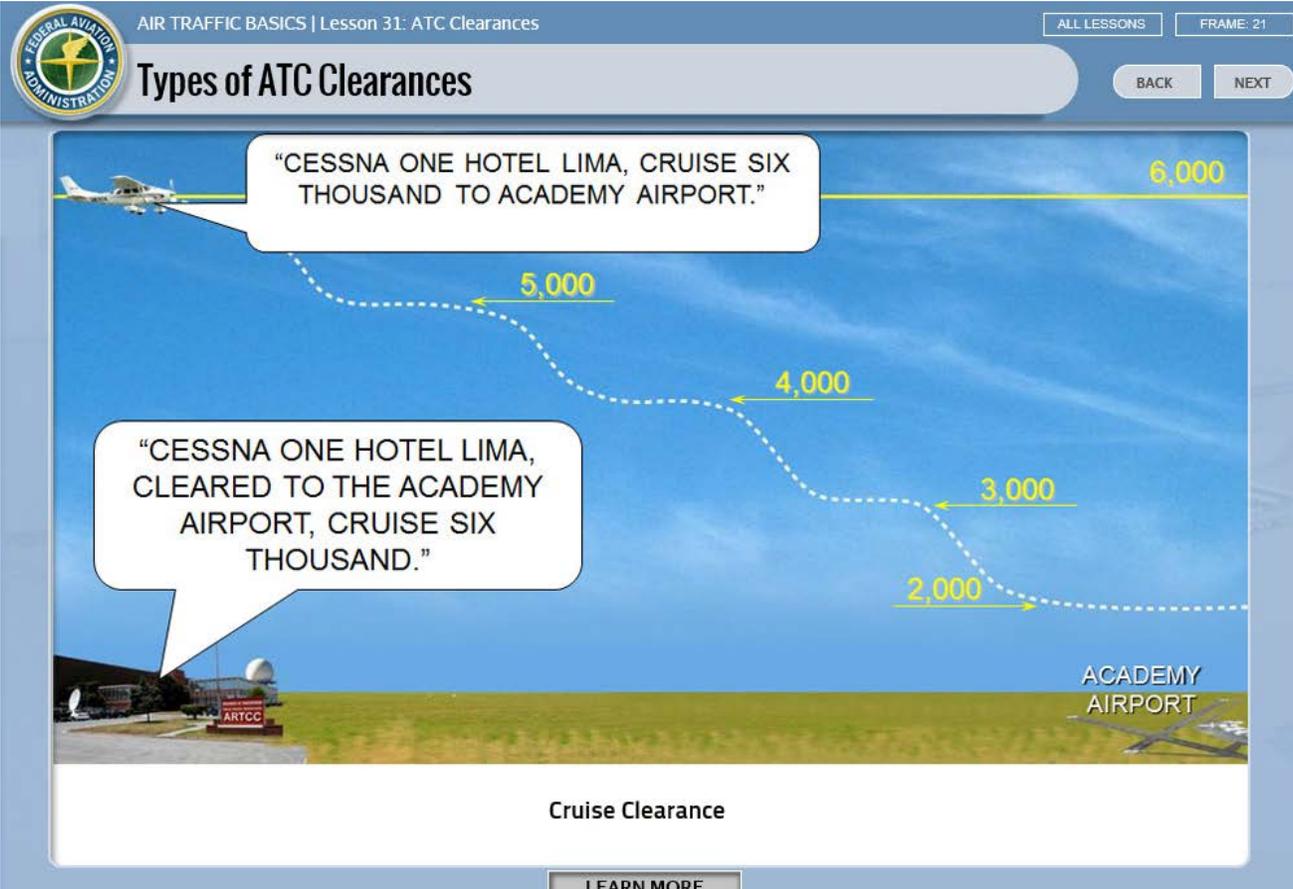
Through clearances are issued for pilots to make intermediate stops while en route to a final destination.

- Issue a Through clearance when an advantage can be realized.

A Through clearance is a combination approach/departure.

- Allows one clearance instead of two or more

Reference: JO 7110.65, Chap. 4



The diagram illustrates a cruise clearance for a Cessna aircraft. The aircraft is shown at an altitude of 6,000 feet, with a speech bubble stating: "CESSNA ONE HOTEL LIMA, CRUISE SIX THOUSAND TO ACADEMY AIRPORT." The flight path is shown as a dashed line that descends from 6,000 feet to 5,000 feet, then to 4,000 feet, then to 3,000 feet, and finally to 2,000 feet. A second speech bubble from the ground station states: "CESSNA ONE HOTEL LIMA, CLEARED TO THE ACADEMY AIRPORT, CRUISE SIX THOUSAND." The ground station is labeled "ARTCC" and the destination is "ACADEMY AIRPORT". The diagram is titled "Types of ATC Clearances" and "Cruise Clearance". Navigation buttons include "ALL LESSONS", "FRAME: 21", "BACK", and "NEXT". A "LEARN MORE" button is located at the bottom of the diagram.

Cruise clearance authorizes a pilot to conduct flight at any altitude from the minimum IFR altitude up to and including the altitude specified in the clearance.

- The pilot may level off at any intermediate altitude within this block of airspace.
- Climb/descent within the block is to be made at the discretion of the pilot.
- Pilots shall not return to an altitude previously reported as vacated.
- It is approval for the pilot to execute a published instrument approach at the destination airport.

Reference: JO 7110.65, Glossary

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Types of ATC Clearances

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“ANGEL ONE, CLEARED VIA APPROVED ALTITUDE RESERVATION CORNET WEST FLIGHT PLAN.”

“ANGEL ONE FLIGHT CLEARED VIA CORNET WEST FLIGHT PLAN.”

Altitude Reservation (ALTRV) Clearance

LEARN MORE

An Altitude Reservation (ALTRV) clearance authorizes aircraft to proceed via a pre-approved altitude reservation flight plan.

- Normally employed for the mass movement of aircraft or other special user requirements

An ALTRV normally includes the:

- Departure
- Climb
- Cruise
- Arrival phase to the point where ATC provides separation between aircraft

Reference: JO 7110.65, Chap. 4

AIR TRAFFIC BASICS | Lesson 31: ATC Clearances

ALL LESSONS FRAME: 23

Types of ATC Clearances

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“MAXJET THIRTY TWO, ACADEMY APPROACH, CLEARED TO JOHNSON VORTAC, MAINTAIN SEVEN THOUSAND, HOLD WEST AS PUBLISHED, EXPECT FURTHER CLEARANCE ZERO TWO ONE FIVE”

Holding Instructions

LEARN MORE

Holding instructions are issued in accordance with holding procedures while awaiting further clearance from air traffic control to keep aircraft:

- Within a specified airspace
- Within a specified area (ground operations)
- At a specified point

Any directions given a pilot, which change an aircraft's speed, heading, altitude or route are also ATC instructions.

Reference: JO 7110.65, Glossary



Conclusion

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Lesson Summary



This lesson covered:

- ATC Clearances
- ATC Clearance Items
- Clearance Prefixes
- Types of ATC Clearances





Resources

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