

Mike Goulian Aviation
Pro Tip of the Month - Sounding Professional on the Radio
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Whether you are departing a busy Class B airspace or an uncontrolled Class G, you will be using the radio in your Cirrus at some point during the flight. Effective communication over that radio will help to increase the safety of your flight. Plus, sounding cool and professional on the radio never hurts. Here are a few tips to make you sound like the awesome pilot you are and to make sure you are effectively communicating with ATC.

The Procedure

1. Listen to the frequency for a few moments before calling up. You really don't want to step on another transmission.
2. Think through what you are going to say. If it's outside of your normal comfort zone, consider jotting down a few notes on what you need to say before you call up.
3. Make your call, being sure to release the PTT (push to talk) button as soon as you finish speaking.
4. Listen for their response, giving them some time in case they are dealing with several frequencies at once.

The Technique

On your initial call up to any ATC facility (ground, tower, approach, etc.), follow this order:

1. Who you are addressing – ex. *“Boston Approach”*
 2. Who you are – Use your full callsign, starting with “Cirrus,” but skipping the first “N.” ex. *“Cirrus Five Seven Two Tango Tango.”*
 3. Your location – ex. *“10 miles North Lawrence”*
 4. Your request – ex. *“Request VFR traffic advisories”*
 5. Other – ex. *“to Laconia at six thousand five hundred”* or *“...with Information Charlie”*
- Note – Numbers 3-5 above can be skipped on the initial call if it's busy. Use your discretion here.

Shortening It Up

We are supposed to “acknowledge all callups or clearances unless the controller ... advises otherwise” (AIM 4-2). However, we also know that things get hectic on the radios, especially here in the Northeast. How can we shorten up our responses if it's busy while still sounding professional? Here are a list of options:

- “Roger” – This means “I understand.” You can use it to respond to information like, “Traffic no longer a factor.”
- “Affirmative” or “Negative” – These mean ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ You can use them to respond to a question like, “Can you accept a short approach”?
- “Wilco” – This phrase is short for “will comply” and means “I'll do that.” You can use this to respond to a request like, “Follow traffic on base.”

** Along with each of these you must also include your callsign! Ex. “Cirrus Two Tango Tango, Roger” **

If All Else Fails?

Just speak English. If you don't know what to say or the situation is getting complicated or urgent, just talk to the controller - I promise they are human. They want to help you ensure a safe outcome for the flight and if you don't have a fancy pilot word for what you need, just talk to them. Getting your message heard and understood is the basis for effective communication.