

What to Say on the Radio

by Bill Woodbury, CFII

Part 1: Uncontrolled Airports

The following scripts are specifically for use at Westover Field in Jackson, CA, but can be adapted for use at any uncontrolled airport by changing the name/location/runway number as appropriate.

Prior to Taxi

“Westover traffic, Cessna 8582Uniform, at the North Hangars, taxiing to runway 19 for departure.”

Before Takeoff

“Westover traffic, Cessna 8582Uniform, taking runway 19, (state direction of departure), Westover.”

Options for direction of departure:

- “Straight out departure”
- “Left crosswind departure”
- “Right crosswind departure”
- “Left downwind departure”
- “Left closed traffic”

Before Landing

If West of the airport: “Westover traffic, Cessna 8582Uniform, 10 miles west, will enter midfield crosswind for left traffic, runway 19, Westover.”

If North of the airport: “Westover traffic, Cessna 8582Uniform, 10 miles north, will enter on the 45 to left downwind for runway 19, Westover.”

If East of the airport: “Westover traffic, Cessna 8582Uniform, 10 miles east, will enter on the 45 to left downwind for runway 19, Westover.”

If South of the airport: “Westover traffic, Cessna 8582U, 10 miles south, will enter on the 45 to left downwind for runway 19, Westover.”

Repeat the above transmission when 5 miles out.

When entering the traffic pattern, make the following transmissions:

If from the West: “Westover traffic, Cessna 82Uniform, overhead the field at 2700, entering left downwind for runway 19, Westover.”

If from the North, East, or South: “Westover traffic, Cessna 82Uniform, entering on the 45 to left downwind, runway 19, Westover.”

Then, when entering downwind: “Westover traffic, Cessna 82Uniform, downwind, runway 19, Westover.”

In the Traffic Pattern: Report Each Leg of the Pattern

“Westover traffic, Cessna 82U, left downwind, runway 19, Westover.”

“Westover traffic, Cessna 82U, left base, runway 19, Westover.”

“Westover traffic, Cessna 82U, turning final, runway 19, Westover.”

After Landing and Clear of the Runway

“Westover traffic, Cessna 82Uniform is clear of the active, taxi to (destination)”:

Optional Destinations: “fuel island.”

“runway 19 for departure.”

“northside hangars.”

Part II: Controlled Airports

Before Landing

15 Miles Out from Airport: Monitor ATIS frequency for wind, altimeter setting, active runway, special instructions. Note ATIS identifier (Information Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, etc.)

10 Miles Out from Airport: “(Stockton) Tower, Cessna 8582Uniform, 10 miles (north, east, south, west) at (altitude), inbound with Information Alpha (or B, C, D, etc).”

Expect traffic pattern entry instructions to active runway. For example,

“Cessna 8582Uniform, enter downwind runway 29Right, report entering downwind,”

or

“Cessna 8582Uniform, enter right base, runway 29Right, report a 2 mile right base,”

or

“Cessna 8582Uniform, make straight -in, runway 29Left, report 2 mile final.”

ALWAYS ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU HEARD A TRANSMISSION OR INSTRUCTION FROM TOWER OR ATC BY STATING THE LAST THREE NUMBERS/LETTERS OF YOUR AIRCRAFT TAIL NUMBER. “82Uniform.”

After Landing

Stop after taxiing off runway, wait for tower instructions. If no instructions after 30 seconds, contact tower and say: “82Uniform is clear of (29Right).”

Tower will give instructions: “Cessna 82Uniform, roger, contact Ground on 121.9.”

You reply: “Roger, 82Uniform”

Contacting Ground Control: Change radio frequency to Ground (usually 121.9);

“(Stockton) Ground, Cessna 8582Uniform, clear of 29Right, taxi to (destination)”

Optional destinations: “transient parking”

“back to the active runway”

Before Taxi:

Monitor ATIS frequency, note wind, altimeter, runway, ATIS identifier

Change to Ground Control frequency: "Stockton Ground, Cessna 8582Uniform, at transient parking, with Information (Bravo)"

Expect reply: "Cessna 8582Uniform, Stockton Ground, taxi runway 29Left via taxiway Bravo, caution incoming King Air."

You reply: "Roger, 82Uniform, taxi runway 29Left via Bravo, will watch for the King Air."

Before Take-Off:

"(Stockton) Tower, Cessna 8582Uniform, ready at 29Left, request (direction of departure)."

Optional directions: "right crosswind departure."

"left crosswind departure."

"straight-out departure."

"left downwind departure."

Expect reply: "Cessna 8582Uniform, right crosswind departure approved, runway 29Left, cleared for takeoff."

or

"Cessna 8582Uniform, runway 29Left, hold short for landing traffic."

or

"Cessna 8582Uniform, unable right crosswind departure at this time for landing traffic, make straight-out until advised, runway 29Left, cleared for takeoff."