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RTF DISCIPLINE - INITIAL CALLS ON FREQUENCY

1 Initial Call

1.1 Experience indicates that the initial call made by IFR pilots when changing frequency often does not contain all the required information and in some cases this has led to a loss of separation. The format for these calls was recently clarified in the UK AIP (Amendment 8/05, GEN 3.3.3 paragraph 9) and will be included in the next amendment to CAP 413 Radiotelephony Manual. The following paragraphs describe appropriate RTF calls that should be made by all IFR pilots when changing frequency in the United Kingdom, unless otherwise instructed by the transferring ATC unit.

2 Format of initial calls

2.1 After Departure

2.1.1 Pilots of aircraft flying Instrument Departures (including those outside controlled airspace) shall include the following information on initial contact with the first en-route ATS Unit:

- (a) Callsign;
- (b) SID or Standard Departure Route Designator (where appropriate);
- (c) **Current or passing level; PLUS**
- (d) **Initial climb level** (ie the first level at which the aircraft will level off unless otherwise cleared. For example, on a Standard Instrument Departure that involves a stepped climb profile, the initial climb level will be the first level specified in the profile).

2.2 Subsequent Frequency Changes

2.2.1 Unless otherwise instructed or where the above paragraph applies, when changing communication channel to another ATC unit or sector (including changes within the same ATS unit), the initial call on the new frequency shall include **aircraft identification and level information only**.

Level information shall be included in the report as follows:

- (a) if the aircraft is in level flight but cleared to another level, the call shall include **the current level and the cleared level**;
- (b) if the aircraft is not in level flight, the call shall include **the cleared level only**;

If the aircraft has been assigned a speed or a heading, this information shall also be included in the initial call on the new frequency.

Note: Except as described above, a pilot receiving a Radar Control Service is not required to report leaving a level, passing a level, or reaching a level, unless specifically requested to do so. Pilots receiving a Radar Advisory Service (RAS) must report before changing heading or level, or if receiving a Radar Information Service (RIS), must report before changing level, level band, or route (as described in the UK AIP ENR 1.6.1, Use of Radar in Air Traffic Services).

3 Phraseology Examples

An example of a standard instrument departure call is therefore:

**WESTBURY DEPARTURE,
FASTAIR 345,
BIGRO 5D,
PASSING ALTITUDE 2300 FEET
CLIMBING FL80**

An example of a standard call changing frequency when on approach to land is therefore:

**WESTBURY APPROACH,
FASTAIR 345,
DESCENDING FL90**

4 It is important that all IFR pilots making such calls to UK Air Traffic Services comply with the requirements described in paragraph 2. The structure of these calls is designed to reduce RTF congestion, whilst providing the ATS Unit with the information necessary to ensure safe separation is maintained. Any element not provided by a pilot on initial contact will require an additional RTF call by the controller thereby adding to frequency congestion. Additionally, any misunderstanding between the controller and the pilot over the clearance to be flown may go undetected, thereby compromising the safety of the aircraft.

5 Good RTF discipline is vital to flight safety. In the UK, regular sampling and monitoring of RTF discipline is carried out and, when necessary, discussions are held with individual airlines to ensure standards are maintained.

This Circular is issued for information, guidance and necessary action.