



SAFETY GRAM

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So there I was (how every good pilot story starts) sitting in the cockpit of a T-6A Texan II for the very first time. I had nerves of steel and the determination of a rhino. My standard issue Air Force helmet strapped on with the visor down and already dreaming of a call sign. Then it happened. My house of cards came crashing down as I keyed the mic and garbled my very first radio transmission. Yikes! How many of us can say that we've been there before?

Radio communication is a skill that every pilot must develop in order to fly SAFELY. Good professional radio communication is a crucial link in the Air Traffic Control (ATC) system. It can be a strong bond between pilots and controllers or it can be broken jargon with little to no understanding resulting in hilarious disaster.

Aero club instructors, we are the first line of defense in this ongoing battle of good -vs- bad radio etiquette. We must continue to stress that the most important factor in pilot - controller communication is understanding. Go the extra mile and simulate clearance, ground and air traffic control instruction. Emphasize the importance of our pilots acknowledging each radio communication with ATC by using the appropriate aircraft call sign and read back. Additionally, define brevity and its importance. There's nothing worse than a pilot who lacks the ability to keep radio communication as brief and concise as possible.

Aero club pilots, good phraseology enhances safety and is the mark of a professional pilot. Jargon, chatter and "CB" slang have no place in ATC communication. No amount of experience is immune to professional radio communication. From time to time, I'd recommend a visit to the Pilot/Controller glossary (https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/media/pcg.pdf) to sharpen your communication skills and definitions.

Aero club students, the best thing you can do is "Chair Fly". I know it sounds silly, but practice makes perfect. Chair flying your radios is just as important as chair flying the sortie. Rehearsing what you're going to say before you say it will save you from the same embarrassment I experienced my first time on the radios. Also, when it's your chance to finally speak on the radios, take the time to listen before you transmit. Often times you'll hear someone more experienced than yourself; take tips on what to say and how to say it.

Good radio communication is paramount to flight SAFETY! Talking on the radio seems intimidating at first but trust me you'll get better at it. We've all been there before.

FLY SAFE!



Maj Derrick L. Hodges Jr., Director of Operations & Safety, USAF Aero Clubs
derrick.hodges.1@us.af.mil; DSN 969-7232, (210) 395-7232