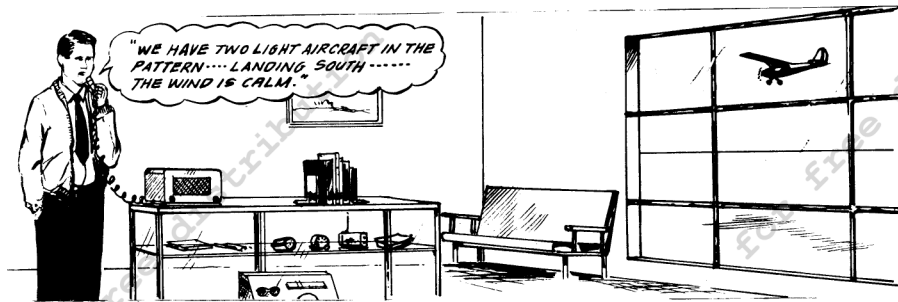


**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Federal Aviation Administration  
VFR PILOT EXAM-O-GRAM\* NO. 35  
UNICOM FREQUENCIES AND USES**



**WHAT IS UNICOM?** UNICOM is a private aeronautical radio station. It provides a communication channel for many airports without control towers (122.8 MHz) and a channel for many airports with control towers (123.0 MHz). Both the ground station and aircraft transmit and receive on the same frequency. Many of the FAA Written Tests contain test items concerning this subject.

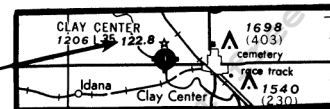
**WHAT USES MAY BE MADE OF UNICOM (122.8 MHz) AT THOSE AIRPORTS NOT SERVED BY A CONTROL TOWER?**

- 1- It may be used for communications with private aircraft concerning runway and wind conditions, types of fuel available, weather, dispatching, availability of ground transportation, food, and lodging.
- 2- It may be very useful in an emergency. To illustrate this point, here is a sample transmission which might be used at a non-controlled airport: "Great Bend UNICOM, this is . . . I am unable to receive a green light 'gear down' indication. Will you have your mechanic check my landing gear as I make a low pass over Runway 17?" In addition to observing the position of the landing gear during a fly by, the mechanic might also review the emergency gear lowering procedures with the pilot.
- 3- At certain airports, a pilot can turn on the runway lights by tuning his transmitter to the airport UNICOM frequency and then "pressing the microphone button" a predetermined number of times within a predetermined time interval. This is true at these locations as long as the UNICOM station receiver is turned on, even though it is unattended. Note the Airman's Information Manual (AIM) excerpt, above.
- 4- It may be useful in a wide variety of other ways, such as: (a) A student calls to advise his instructor that he is experiencing a rough engine and seeks advice, (b) A private pilot calls in and asks if a mechanic is available to work on his inoperative aircraft tachometer, (c) A doctor requests that an ambulance meet his airplane upon landing to pick up a hospital patient.

**OHIO**

§ LIMA 4 NW  
827 H35 (1) BL4 S3 F4 U-1 FSS: FINDLAY  
Remarks: P-line N, S. For runway lights press mike button 4 times within 5 seconds on UNICOM freq; lights will remain on for 15 min.

**HOW CAN A PILOT DETERMINE IF UNICOM IS AVAILABLE AT AN AIRPORT WITHOUT A CONTROL TOWER?** The airport information lists the UNICOM frequency 122.8 MHz.



CLAY CENTER MUNI (1K2) 2W 39°23'00" 97°10'00"  
@ 1206 H35/17.35 (1) BL4 S5 F12.18 U-1 FSS: MANHATTAN  
REMARKS: ARPT ATTENDED DAYLIGHT OTHER HRS CALL 632-3217. ROAD IN RWY 35  
APCH. ASSOC FSS OPERS 0600-2200 LCL, OTHER HRS CTC SALINA FSS.

The availability of UNICOM can also be determined by referring to the Airport Directory Section of AIM. Note the UNICOM symbol "U-1" is used at airports without a control tower.

**CAN COMMUNICATIONS ALWAYS BE ESTABLISHED ON UNICOM?** No. Most pilots who land regularly at UNICOM equipped airports, have on occasion been unable to get a reply from UNICOM stations. This situation is usually caused by a shortage of personnel at small airports. Sometimes this results in the UNICOM being "on" but unattended. In some instances, the volume control on the station receiver may have been turned down and then forgotten. Although these situations are unfortunate, pilots should realize they may occur.

\* Exam-O-Grams are non-directive in nature and are issued solely as an information service to individuals interested in Airman Written Examinations.

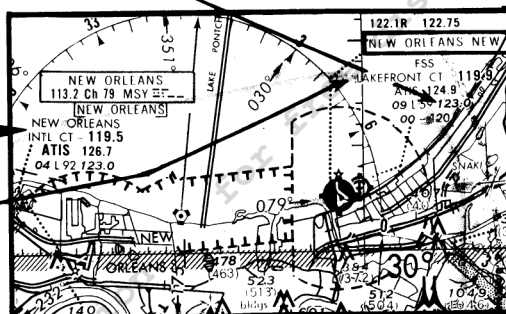
HOW IS UNICOM USED AT AIRPORTS SERVED BY A CONTROL TOWER? Communications on 123.0 MHz are identical to those permitted on 122.8 MHz with the exception of information such as runway and wind conditions, weather, etc., which should be furnished by the tower.

HOW DOES A PILOT DETERMINE IF UNICOM IS AVAILABLE AT AN AIRPORT WITH A CONTROL TOWER? The Airport/Facility Directory excerpt to the left shows how UNICOM is listed by the symbol "U-2" in AIM.

NEW ORLEANS  
 LAKEFRONT (NEW) IFR 5NE FSS: NEW ORLEANS on Fld  
 9 H59/17-35(3) (S-60, D-70, DT-110) BLS,7A,10,11,13 S5 F12,  
 18,30 O×1,3 U2

The frequency 123.0 MHz appears in the airport data on the sectional chart.

HOW ARE UNICOM STATIONS IDENTIFIED? Usually by the name of the airport, but sometimes by the name of the fixed-base operator, or even the town where the station is located. For example: In the New Orleans area there are two airports--Lakefront and International-- located about 13 miles apart, and both have UNICOM stations on 123.0. A transient pilot who desires to use UNICOM and doesn't know the name of the operators in the area would normally address his call to "Lakefront UNICOM" or "New Orleans International UNICOM," rather than "New Orleans UNICOM."



HOW DO PILOTS ABUSE OR MISUSE UNICOM? Perhaps one of the most common abuses is the situation where several aircraft are flying at high altitudes and using one of the UNICOM frequencies for lengthy aircraft-to-aircraft radio chatter. At high altitudes their transmissions reach out in all directions and tend to block out many local airport UNICOM transmissions. Remember, use UNICOM like a party line telephone--be brief, transmit only essential messages.

Federal Aviation Administration  
 Flight Standards National Field Office  
 Examinations Branch  
 P.O. Box 25082  
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125

Exam-O-Grams available free of charge--  
 single copy only per request. Permission  
 is hereby granted to reproduce this  
 material.

NOTE: UNICOM stations are crystal controlled to transmit and receive only on one frequency--either 122.8 or 123.0 MHz.

UNICOM is never used for Air Traffic Control purposes.

UNICOM frequency 123.05 MHz has been added for use at Heliports.