VFR PILOT EXAM-O-GRAM* NO. 43

ATIS (AUTOMATIC TERMINAL INFORMATION SERVICE)
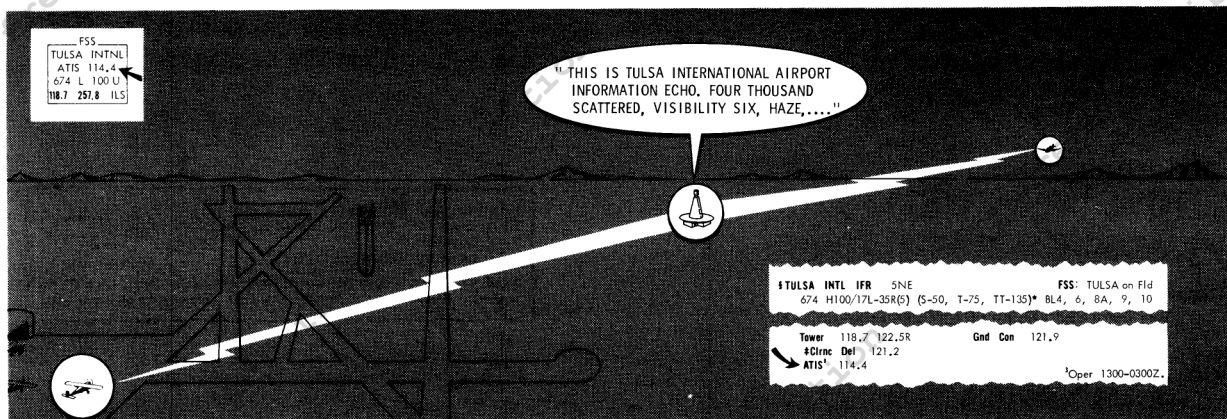
The Federal Aviation Administration is constantly striving to improve its service to the public. This Exam-O-Gram describes Automatic Terminal Information Service (ATIS) which has improved Air Traffic Controller effectiveness and relieved radio frequency congestion in many terminal areas. Because ATIS contributes to safety, FAA written tests may include questions on this subject.

WHAT IS ATIS? The continuous broadcast of recorded non-control information in selected high-activity terminal areas. It relieves frequency congestion by automating the repetitive transmission of routine but essential information on frequencies other than those normally used for airport traffic control. This service is presently being provided at many FAA tower-controlled airports.

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION IS PROVIDED BY ATIS? Sky condition, visibility, wind, altimeter setting, instrument approach, and runway/s in use are continuously broadcast for the designated airport. NOTAMS, Airman Advisories, or other information pertinent to the airport will be included as appropriate.

HOW ARE ATIS BROADCASTS RECEIVED? By tuning to the appropriate frequency published on the sectional charts or in the Airport/Facility Directory of the Airman's Information Manual as depicted above. This is usually the frequency of the VOR/VORTAC, ILS, or VOT serving the terminal airport. However, in some cases, the broadcast may be made on a VHF tower frequency designated for this purpose only. ATIS broadcasts on VOR/VORTAC facilities may be interrupted by the FSS to reply to frequency limited aircraft if necessary.

WHEN SHOULD THE ATIS BROADCASTS BE UTILIZED? Prior to requesting taxi clearance by departing aircraft and prior to reporting to the tower by arriving aircraft.

IS ATIS DESIGNED PRIMARILY FOR THE IFR PILOT? No! The information broadcast is applicable to all departing and arriving aircraft, VFR as well as IFR.

DOES THE ATIS BROADCAST CONSTITUTE A CLEARANCE TO TAXI FOR TAKEOFF OR A CLEARANCE TO LAND? No! Since only routine information is contained in these broadcasts, ATC clearances to taxi, take off, or land must be issued separately to the individual aircraft by the appropriate controller on the appropriate frequency.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF ATIS OVER THE LONG-STANDING METHOD OF INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONS? There are three distinct advantages: First, extensive utilization of ATIS by pilots will greatly reduce the congestion on tower and ground control frequencies, and the routine workload on the controllers. This will allow the controllers to devote more time to the specific control of arriving and departing aircraft; second, the ATIS broadcast contains more information than the normal tower or ground control instructions for taxi, takeoff, or landing (i. e. , weather, NOTAMS, etc.); and third, the pilot can receive this information when cockpit duties are least pressing and listen to as many repeats as desired. (This should be a great boon to student pilots or pilots who operate infrequently at tower controlled airports.)

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WHAT DOES A TYPICAL ATIS BROADCAST SOUND LIKE? Sample broadcast --". . THIS IS TULSA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT INFORMATION ECHO. FOUR THOUSAND SCATTERED, VISIBILITY SIX, HAZE, WIND ONE FIVE ZERO DEGREES AT ONE THREE. TEMPERATURE EIGHT ONE, DEWPOINT SIX FOUR. ALTIMETER TWO NINER EIGHT NINER. I L S RUNWAY ONE SEVEN LEFT IN USE. LANDING AND DEPARTURE RUNWAYS ONE SEVEN LEFT AND ONE SEVEN RIGHT. NOTAM, RUNWAY ONE TWO, THREE ZERO CLOSED TO ALL OPERATIONS. INFORM TULSA APPROACH CONTROL, TOWER, OR GROUND CONTROL ON INITIAL CONTACT THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION ECHO. ."

WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC PROCEDURES FOR UTILIZING ATIS BROADCASTS? The broadcast should be monitored prior to requesting taxi clearance or prior to requesting landing clearance. Arriving aircraft should monitor the broadcast well in advance of entering the Airport Traffic Area. Each ATIS broadcast will carry an identifying phonetic alphabet code word (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, etc.). This code word is important. After receiving the ATIS broadcast, the pilot, on initial contact with ground control, tower, or approach control, should state he has the information and repeat the specific code word. Example -- ". . TULSA GROUND CONTROL, THIS IS BEECHCRAFT SEVEN FOUR SIX FOUR CHARLIE. ON TERMINAL RAMP, READY TO TAXI. I HAVE INFORMA-TION ECHO. OVER. ."

HOW OFTEN ARE ATIS BROADCASTS CHANGED? They are normally updated hourly. However, they will be updated more frequently should a significant change occur in the information. Each time the message is updated, the next phonetic alphabet code word will be used.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PILOTS REQUEST CLEARANCE WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING RECEIPT OF THE ATIS BROADCAST OR ACKNOWLEDGE BY A CODE WORD WHICH IS NOT CURRENT? In either case the controller will issue the normal taxi or landing information.

ATIS IS A VALUABLE SERVICE. ALL PILOTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO USE IT EXTENSIVELY.

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