

PARAPARA ... UM ... ?

// By Liz Hardy, Airways senior flight service specialist

Communicating is essential in a busy mandatory broadcast zone like Paraparaumu. It's also one of only two aerodromes with an aerodrome flight information service.

If you're heading near Paraparaumu or Milford, brush up on aerodrome flight information service (AFIS) procedures. Plan your calls well in advance to avoid floundering on the radio.

For Paraparaumu, check out the MBZ detail on Visual Navigation Chart (VNC) C2 as part of your preflight planning – it has some interesting features, including three different upper limits.

The Paraparaumu MBZ extends up to 4 NM beyond Kapiti Island to the west from Paraparaumu to Pukerua Bay. Transiting should not be difficult if you know how an AFIS functions, and its radio requirements.

The MBZ is transponder-mandatory 1500 ft and above, but it's best practice to operate your transponder in Mode C at all times.

Operating within the vicinity of the aerodrome

Only call when you're ready, not before your engine run-ups, and so on.

First, establish communication:

Pilot: "Paraparam flight service, Alpha Bravo Charlie" (note placename abbreviation)

AFIS: "Alpha Bravo Charlie, Paraparam flight service"

Then intentions:

Pilot: "Alpha Bravo Charlie, C152 on the aero club apron, vacating north off runway 34, POB 1"

AFIS: "Alpha Bravo Charlie, seal 34, wind 340 5-10 knots, QNH 1013, no reported traffic"

Pilot: "Seal 34, QNH 1013, taxiing via taxiway Delta and Alpha, Alpha Bravo Charlie".

When AFIS is passing traffic information, they may say something like this:

"No reported traffic"

There's no reported traffic operating in the MBZ. But remember this does not account for any aircraft that haven't made themselves known to AFIS.

"Traffic is"



There's traffic that could affect your flight. AFIS will pass traffic information only on aircraft that could affect your flight, not all the traffic operating in the MBZ.

Where there are multiple aircraft, AFIS will try to group them together to help you remember where everyone is, eg, four aircraft operating in the circuit, three aircraft northbound, north of Paraparaumu.

If AFIS foresees a potential conflict, they will try to alert you. AFIS will say something like this:

“Report sighting C152 climbing upwind”

There's an aircraft going to occupy the same space as you (in this case, upwind/crosswind) and you haven't indicated if you have seen it and how you will fly around each other.

“Report position”

AFIS is double-checking where you are to maintain their picture.

“Advise intentions once airborne”

You've only advised your taxi route and not what your activity will be, and AFIS cannot give you relevant traffic information.

“Caution C152 short final seal 34”

AFIS is elevating traffic information to indicate there's an aircraft close to you. You need to act and communicate what you're doing.

Beyond the vicinity of the aerodrome in the MBZ

If you're transiting the MBZ and your flight doesn't take you near the vicinity of the aerodrome, you don't have to communicate with AFIS. However, you do have to make the mandatory broadcasts to “Paraparaumu traffic” (note placename is now in full).

Similarly, if you've left the vicinity of the aerodrome, and are operating within the MBZ (typically between Peka Peka and Otaki, or around Kapiti Island), unless you're returning to the circuit you don't need to direct your calls to AFIS – just “Paraparaumu traffic” or “Otaki traffic”.

When you vacate the MBZ it's good practice to let traffic know you've left. AFIS will take note so they don't pass you as traffic to inbound aircraft. You can request QNH for your onward journey. ➡

// WHAT IS AFIS?

It isn't a small insect that eats your plants. It also isn't air traffic control.

AFIS is an *advisory* service that passes on weather and traffic information to help pilots make safe decisions.

This service provides an extra layer of safety at an aerodrome with a high number of movements, but not enough to require air traffic control. Currently, there are only two AFIS aerodromes: Milford and Paraparaumu.

On first contact, establish communications with AFIS. Then give your call sign, aircraft type, position (location and altitude), POB, and what your intentions are (eg, to join the circuit).

AFIS will respond with QNH, weather information, runway-in-use and relevant traffic information.

Reply by acknowledging the conditions, runway-in-use, and QNH. Then state what you're doing so other pilots can integrate with you.

Use these terms to describe your intentions:

Joining – means you want to join the aerodrome for circuits, or to land. AFIS will give you weather and traffic information related to your route and landing.

Vacating – means you want to depart the airspace. AFIS will not keep tabs on you once you're gone.

Operating – means you're intending to vacate the circuit to operate in a specific area within the local airspace. This means AFIS will expect you will, at some stage, return to land, or vacate the airspace.

Transiting – means you're passing overhead through the airspace. AFIS will give you the local QNH and known traffic information.

Remain in the circuit – AFIS will give you full weather information and traffic related to operating in the circuit.

If you've just heard the QNH, conditions, and traffic from another aircraft's transmission, you can simply say, for example, “roger traffic and conditions QNH 1013”.

You're responsible for safely maintaining separation and sequencing with other traffic. AFIS helps you form the mental picture to do that.

Don't be afraid to talk directly to other aircraft if you are trying to integrate with them for sequencing.

Refer to AC91-9 *Radiotelephony Manual*.

See these GAP booklets for more information:

Plane talking
New Zealand airspace.

Visit aviation.govt.nz and search on those titles, or email info@caa.govt.nz for a printed copy.