

# “Parapara... um...?”

To avoid floundering on the radio, plan your calls well in advance. In an MBZ, especially one as busy as Paraparaumu’s, communicating is essential.

We covered mandatory broadcast zones (MBZs) in the July/Aug 2014 *Vector*, but recent occurrence data shows a number of aircraft are still transiting the Paraparaumu MBZ without broadcasting intentions. Some of this confusion might stem from the fact that Paraparaumu Aerodrome has an Aerodrome Flight Information Service (AFIS) in the middle of the MBZ.

The requirements for operating in an MBZ are set out in rule 91.135, and summarised in AIPNZ, GEN 5.3. Even though Paraparaumu’s MBZ is unique, the associated reporting requirements aren’t. In essence a pilot is required to report:

- » position, altitude, and intentions on entry, and at prescribed intervals while in the MBZ;
- » when joining the circuit of an aerodrome in an MBZ; and
- » before entering a runway for takeoff within an MBZ.

As Paraparaumu has an AFIS, a pilot intending to operate at the aerodrome must communicate with the AFIS unit prior to doing these manoeuvres, irrespective of the MBZ.

## To Paint the Picture

As part of your pre-flight planning, check out the MBZ detail on Visual Navigation Chart (VNC) C2 – it has some tricky 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. High ground makes skirting the eastern boundary in an attempt to bypass the MBZ difficult. But transiting shouldn’t be a hassle if you know how an AFIS functions, and know the radio requirements.

The Paraparaumu MBZ is transponder mandatory down to 1500 ft, but regardless of altitude, it’s best practice to operate your transponder in Mode C at all times.

## What’s an AFIS?

An AFIS may be provided at an aerodrome where, despite not being busy enough to warrant an air traffic control service, it’s still busy enough that some safety oversight is required.

There are only two AFIS units in the country and Paraparaumu, or “Paraparam” on 118.3 MHz (where syllables are a precious commodity) is the busier of the two. Milford Sound hosts the other AFIS, but Paraparaumu’s movements (21,500 in 2015) far exceed Milford’s, even with the recent cessation of gliding activity and associated disestablishment of general aviation area NZG673. Daily GA movements can be in the hundreds, with extensive flight training taking place, and scheduled IFR operations every day, including Air New Zealand Q300s.

Don’t be fooled by the presence of the tower, the AFIS is not a control service. The resident flight service operators won’t issue clearances or instructions to separate you from other aircraft. They will provide pertinent flight information about known traffic, including type, direction, level, and position so you can sight other traffic and maintain a good distance. For IFR operations, AFIS staff may relay clearances from Wellington air traffic control for adjoining airspace entry.

## Radio Requirements

When establishing communications with the AFIS, use this phraseology:

*“Paraparam Flight Service, Alfa Bravo Charlie” (for example).*

The AFIS will reply with *“Alfa Bravo Charlie, Paraparam Flight Service”*.

After that you can continue with your call sign, aircraft type, position, intentions, and POB.

Make sure you maintain your AFIS etiquette by keeping the four Cs in mind.



### **Clear**

When you're transmitting on the radio, speak slowly and clearly. The AFIS communications equipment has a function that allows the operators to repeat the last transmission received, but as soon as another transmission is made, the previous one will be overridden.

### **Consistent**

Be consistent by using standard phraseology, and also give the information in a specific order – it makes it much easier for the listener when they're expecting the information in a specific format.

### **Concise**

Transmit only for the minimum time necessary to get your intentions across. Remember, after establishing communications, you can save radio time with "copy conditions" or "copy traffic" if you've already picked up the weather, runway or traffic information from a previous transmission. That saves the AFIS specialist repeating themselves unnecessarily.

### **Correct**

Position reports are important whether addressed to the AFIS or not, as the AFIS provides information to departing aerodrome traffic about other known MBZ traffic. These reports need to be correct. Avoid vague phrases like "abeam Kapiti Island". Try to be as accurate as possible with your report, for example, "1 NM south of Kapiti Island".

### **Unattended Radio Calls**

If you're transiting the MBZ and your flight path doesn't take you near the vicinity of the aerodrome and its circuit, you don't have to establish communication with the AFIS. However, you do have to make the mandatory broadcasts to "Paraparaumu traffic".

Similarly, if you have left the vicinity of the aerodrome, and are established in a training area within the MBZ (typically between Waikanae and Otaki, or around Kapiti Island), you don't need to direct your calls to the AFIS anymore; just "Paraparaumu traffic" or "Otaki traffic".

If you want further information on good radio practice, a *Plane Talking* online course and GAP booklet are available, see: [www.caa.govt.nz/avkiwi](http://www.caa.govt.nz/avkiwi).

## **Acronym Soup**

New to aviation? As with any specialised field, it can sometimes feel like you need a Garmin G5000 to navigate your way through the jargon.

In this article, we're discussing the AFIS, not to be confused with the ATIS or IFIS. The ATIS (Automatic Terminal Information Service) is used to broadcast aerodrome weather information. The IFIS (Internet Flight Information Service) is a pre-flight information and flight planning service for those within the New Zealand Flight Information Region.

## **A Couple of Reminders**

Here's an occurrence from the files:

*Aircraft called rolling off runway 34 after being advised of a glider on final approach. This resulted in a simultaneous parallel operation.*

Simultaneous parallel operations are not permitted at Paraparaumu – the grass and paved runways 16/34 aren't far enough apart to provide the required safety margin. Aircraft taking off or landing on paved or grass runways 16/34, or the helicopter TLOF must ensure there is adequate spacing between other aircraft taking off or landing on a parallel runway/TLOF. Horizontal spacing of at least 600 metres between aircraft is advised.

VFR pilots should be aware of IFR aircraft typically making their arrivals on an RNAV approach – the RNAV16 involves a very long final approach for Runway 16 from outside the MBZ between Kapiti Island and the coastline. The RNAV34 involves a descent towards Pukerua Bay from the west before a left turn abeam Paekakariki, with continued descent to intercept a long final approach for Runway 34.

Paraparaumu aerodrome is inherently busy with various types of aircraft activity and many radio transmissions. Make sure you are familiar with applicable NZPP pages in the AIP, are up to date with local weather, Supps and NOTAMs, and maintain a high standard of airmanship and situational awareness. ■

