

Woody Lesikar

To: woody@westhoustonairport.com
Subject: Traffic Pattern Operations

To our flyers:

Just a short note regarding West Houston Airport flight operations.

When operating at the West Houston Airport which is a non-towered airport, unless specified or depicted otherwise by a segmented circle or other written notice such as in the Airport Facilities Directory, all turns in the traffic pattern *must* be to the left and left hand patterns are procedurally required. When other aircraft are in the pattern, all pilots making straight-in approaches *must* give way to all others in the pattern. Pilots making straight in approaches and right hand traffic patterns are subject to violation by the FAA and/or if an accident happens such as a mid-air collision, they will most likely be held accountable, if they survive. Emergencies take precedent over this of course. West Houston Airport does not oppose straight in approaches, however pilots making straight-ins, must give way to all others adhering to the left hand pattern. If no other aircraft are in the pattern then a straight-in approach is easy, economical and safe. When flying straight-in from miles out, indicate your distance and direction from the airport, not the "waypoint", initial or final approach fix. The reason for this is that VFR private pilots flying in the pattern don't know where those are in relation to the airport. Also, when calling in on a straight-in, say: "421PK ten mile straight-in runway 15, will give way to other traffic in the pattern". Then follow up as you listen up to the radio for those in the pattern. It is suggested that you not say "Other traffic in the pattern, please advise". That's because there may be three or four others acknowledging your call at one time. No need for that in particular when you have "traffic" on your GPS or MFD depicted and have been monitoring the frequency for that traffic. Also note that just because you are on an IFR flight plan, that has *nothing* to do with you having priority over other VFR traffic in the pattern. When numerous aircraft are in the pattern it is best to get in line with the others. Of course medical and charity flights should acknowledge such over the radio and others in the pattern should give those special privileges and consideration. Use landing lights, recognition lights and other means of visually identifying your aircraft and position both day and night while operating in proximity to the airport.

I have previously sent out an article from the AOPA magazine by Mr. Yodice, the attorney for AOPA that further details the above information. If you don't have a copy of it and would like one, please let me know.

When receiving a clearance on the ground and the controller says "Hold", that does not mean "Hold" on the runway. You are responsible for making sure that you have not pulled out in front of others and/or delaying or causing others to have to go around as a result of you sitting on the runway. Do not "park, sit, or hold on the runway waiting on your clearance. Be prepared to take-off as soon as you are lined up and on the centerline ready for departure. Also, please let others go by you if you are running up or getting a clearance at the end of the taxiway. Use other taxiways such as A through F for run-ups if you need more time and other airplanes are behind you. Also pull over to the side of the taxiway as close to the edge as possible without getting in the grass to allow others, particularly turboprops and jets to pass by you. Most of those larger more sophisticated aircraft are ready to depart as soon as they taxi out to the runway. Be observant as to aircraft behind you and pullover onto and down a taxiway for completion of your pre-takeoff check. Always be courteous and never make statements on the radio that indicate hostility, tension or unprofessional behavior or a bad attitude. Remember that you were once a student pilot and you at one time or the other made mistakes, even as a professional. Act and communicate in the same manner as you would appreciate from others.

This is sent to you as a courtesy and for information purposes only and is not authority to deviate from the Federal Aviation Regulations. Please pass this around to your flying friends.

If you have any questions or wish to respond in any way, your comments are welcome.

Regards,

Woody Lesikar