



Safety net – Flight Following

Flight Following is the provision of an ongoing surveillance information service (SIS) to VFR flights in Class E and G airspace.

This service can provide improved situational awareness and assists pilots in avoiding collisions with other aircraft. It is available on request, but always subject to air traffic control (ATC) workload. It is detailed in AIP GEN and ENR.

When should I use this service?

Use Flight Following as a resource to help manage your workload and improve your situational awareness. If you are unsure about the position of traffic, need help finding your exact position, or need a heading to somewhere, consider using Flight Following.

The service can be particularly useful when navigating around controlled or restricted airspace, even if you are familiar with the area.

What service do I receive?

When operating on Flight Following you will receive:

- traffic information
- position information (on request)
- navigation assistance (on request)
- SAR alerting.

Remember that Flight Following is only advisory in nature; terrain clearance, separation from other aircraft and obtaining clearances into controlled airspace are still your responsibility. The traffic information provided may also be incomplete.

Due to the nature of the system coverage and individual aircraft equipment levels, not all conflicting aircraft can be detected so continue to keep a good lookout.

How do I request this service?

To request Flight Following you must be in direct VHF communications with ATC at all times. You must also be equipped with a serviceable SSR transponder or ADS-B transmitter, and remain within surveillance system coverage.

On initial contact with ATC you must:

- advise the service required (e.g. traffic, position assistance), if requesting a one-off service or
- use the phrase "REQUEST FLIGHT FOLLOWING", if requesting an ongoing service.

When ATC respond to your request, advise position, level and intentions.

The service will commence after the controller reports that you have been identified. ATC may assign you a specific transponder code.

Is this service always available?

This service is not always available. If the service is not able to be provided, the controller will advise "SURVEILLANCE SERVICE NOT AVAILABLE".

The service may not be available for a number of reasons:

- limitations of surveillance (radar or ADS-B) ③ volume of traffic
- air traffic services workload
- frequency congestion.

The reason for not being able to provide, or continue to provide Flight Following may not be obvious to you. The controller will not disclose that reason.

What do I need to do while receiving flight following?

While receiving Flight Following you must:

- maintain a continuous listening watch with ATC
- advise when you are leaving the frequency-such as when changing to a CTAF
- tell ATC prior to changing track or level.

When does the Flight Following service stop?

The Flight Following service can be ended by you or the controller at any time.

Flight Following may also be ended when you approach the boundary of the controller's area of responsibility. They will generally advise "IDENTIFICATION TERMINATED, FREQUENCY CHANGE APPROVED".

If you would like Flight Following to continue into the next controller's area of responsibility you should "REQUEST HAND-OFF FOR FLIGHT FOLLOWING". The controller will coordinate with the next controller and, if they accept you, you will be instructed to change frequency.

For current information on Flight Following, visit the AIP GEN 3.3 (15 June 23).

Submit a flight plan

You can improve your chance of receiving a Flight Following service by submitting an ICAO flight plan before flying. This reduces controller workload significantly. If a flight plan is not in the system, one will need to be created with details obtained over the radio and this can congest the frequency, take time and add considerably to controller workload.

More information

More pilot safety information is available on the Airservices website at bit.ly/pilotsafety.



If you have any feedback or questions about this publication please email, safetypromotions@airservicesaustralia.com.

