



CONTACT AND VISUAL APPROACHES

1. Visual Approach

- a. A visual approach is conducted on an IFR flight plan and authorizes you to proceed visually and clear of clouds to the airport.
 - 1) Visual approaches are an IFR procedure conducted under IFR in visual meteorological conditions (VMC).
 - a) Thus, cloud clearance requirements of FAR 91.155, Basic VFR Weather Minimums, are not applicable.
 - 2) Visual approaches reduce pilot and ATC workload and expedite traffic by shortening flight paths to the airport.
 - a) It is your responsibility to advise ATC as soon as possible if a visual approach is not desired.
- b. ATC may issue a visual approach clearance when
 - 1) You have either the airport or the preceding identified aircraft in sight, and
 - 2) The reported weather at the airport must have a ceiling at or above 1,000 ft. and visibility of 3 SM or greater.
 - a) When operating to an airport without a weather reporting service, ATC may initiate a visual approach provided there is reasonable assurance (e.g., area weather reports, PIREPs, etc.) that weather at the airport has a ceiling at or above 1,000 ft. and visibility of 3 SM or greater.
- c. When operating to an airport with an operating control tower, you may be cleared to conduct a visual approach to one runway while other aircraft are conducting IFR or VFR approaches to another parallel, intersecting, or converging runway.
 - 1) When operating to an airport with parallel runways separated by less than 2,500 ft., you must report sighting the aircraft you are to follow, unless ATC provides standard separation.
 - 2) When operating to an airport with parallel runways separated by at least 2,500 ft. but less than 4,300 ft., you will be vectored by ATC to the final approach course at an angle of not more than 30° unless radar, vertical, or visual separation is provided during the turn-on.
 - a) The purpose of the 30° intercept angle is to reduce the potential for overshoots of the final approach course and to preclude side-by-side operations with one or both aircraft in a belly-up configuration during the turn.
 - 3) When the parallel runways are separated by 4,300 ft. or more, or intersecting or converging runways are in use, ATC may authorize a visual approach after advising all aircraft involved that other aircraft are conducting operations to the other runway.
 - a) ATC may advise pilots of these operations through the use of ATIS.
- d. If you have the airport in sight but cannot see the aircraft you are to follow, ATC may clear you for the visual approach.
 - 1) However, ATC retains both separation and wake turbulence separation responsibility.



- e. When you accept a visual approach clearance to follow an identified preceding airplane, you are required to establish a safe landing interval behind that airplane.
 - 1) Additionally, you are responsible for wake turbulence separation.
 - a) ATC is responsible for informing you when the airplane you are following is a heavy airplane.
- f. During the visual approach, you must notify ATC immediately if you are unable to continue following the preceding aircraft, cannot remain clear of clouds, or lose sight of the airport.
- g. A visual approach is not an IAP and thus has no missed approach segment.
 - 1) At an airport with an operating control tower, if you must go around, you will be issued an appropriate advisory/clearance/instruction by the tower.
 - 2) At an airport without an operating control tower, you are expected to remain clear of clouds and complete a landing as soon as possible.
 - a) If a landing cannot be accomplished, you are expected to remain clear of clouds and contact ATC as soon as possible for further clearance.
- h. Authorization to conduct a visual approach is an IFR authorization and does not alter IFR flight plan cancellation responsibility.
- i. Radar service is automatically terminated, without your being advised, when you are instructed to change to advisory frequency.

2. Contact Approach

- a. A contact approach is an approach procedure that you may use (with prior authorization from ATC) instead of conducting a standard (or special) IAP to an airport.
 - 1) A contact approach is not intended for use by a pilot on an IFR clearance to operate to an airport not having a published and functioning IAP.
 - a) Nor is it intended for a pilot to conduct an instrument approach to one airport and then, when "in the clear," to discontinue that approach and proceed to another airport.
- b. You may request ATC authorization for a contact approach provided you are clear of clouds, have at least 1-SM flight visibility, and reasonably expect to continue to your destination airport in those conditions.
 - 1) During the execution of a contact approach, you assume the responsibility for obstruction clearance.
 - 2) You must advise ATC immediately if you are unable to continue the contact approach (cannot remain clear of clouds) or if you encounter less than 1-SM flight visibility.
 - 3) If radar service is being received, it will automatically terminate when you are instructed to change to advisory frequency.
- c. ATC may authorize a contact approach provided
 - 1) You specifically request the approach. ATC cannot initiate this approach.
 - 2) The reported ground visibility at your destination airport is at least 1 SM.
 - 3) The approach will be made to an airport that has a standard or special IAP.
 - 4) Approved separation is applied between aircraft so cleared and between these aircraft and other IFR or special VFR aircraft.