

# CALLBACK



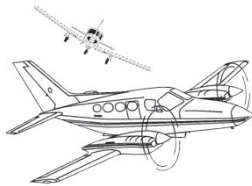
From NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System

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## Non-Towered Airport Operations— A Cooperative Effort

By following the FAA recommended procedures for operations at nontowered airports, pilots help to ensure that traffic flows in an orderly and safe pattern. Aircraft without radios have to be especially careful to adhere to published procedures so that all aircraft in the pattern can effectively employ the “see and be seen” concept. For aircraft with radios, communication enhances traffic pattern safety and involves not only transmitting one’s intentions, but also listening attentively. The following ASRS reports deal with radio communication issues at nontowered airports.



### Takeoff Standoffs

In the following two reports, pilots chose to use a runway that was contrary to the wind direction and prevailing traffic flow (a procedure that is certainly not recommended). If such a procedure is used, then cooperation, common sense, and courtesy require that the pilot clearly communicate his/her intentions and listen for opposing traffic.

■ Upon finishing our takeoff checklist at the run-up area by Runway 26, we taxied to the hold short line (waiting for a C172 to land) and announced that we were holding short of Runway 26 for takeoff. The winds were southwesterly at seven knots.... After waiting for the C172 to clear the runway, we announced that we were taking Runway 26 for departure. Upon starting our takeoff roll, we heard a garbled transmission about Runway 8. We immediately queried on CTAF if there was traffic on Runway 8. After no response and no visual sign of an aircraft, we again called on CTAF and asked if there was an aircraft calling about Runway 8. Again there was no response. At about 65 knots (rotation speed was 71 knots), we made a visual sighting of a twin Piper rolling on Runway 8. Immediately we began a rejected takeoff and announced, “Rejecting on Runway 26,” on the CTAF. During the reject, we maintained directional control and pulled safely to the right side of the runway. The Piper stopped and pulled off on a taxiway.

Contributing factors include the failure of the Piper to communicate clearly and utilizing the wrong runway per winds and traffic. Also, the Piper’s landing light was off, making him difficult to see in a see-and-be-seen, high-density traffic environment.

■ The wind was from the southeast at ten knots. I announced on CTAF that I was taxiing onto Runway 11 for departure. After taxiing onto the runway and starting

the takeoff roll, a Cessna announced on CTAF that he was taking Runway 29 for departure. I immediately asked him to hold his position as I had already started my takeoff on Runway 11. He did not respond and continued to taxi onto Runway 29 at which point I aborted my takeoff. As I came to a stop, I noticed that he was starting his takeoff roll. I made an immediate 180-degree turn on the runway and exited at the nearest taxiway.... He passed approximately 100 feet above me and about 50 feet laterally. I asked him on the CTAF if he had seen me or heard my radio transmissions. His response was that he had not. When I informed him that he had created a conflict, he seemed indignant, as though he had not done anything wrong. I also suggested that taking off downwind was not a safe procedure. His response was that it was his prerogative.... I believe that by choosing to takeoff downwind, he created a potential collision conflict by opposing the prevailing flow of traffic.

Airport layout and terrain features may also be factors that affect departures from nontowered airports. The following report addresses a takeoff situation in which it is imperative that pilots be especially vigilant and take the time to ensure that other aircraft are aware of their presence and intended action.

■ The wind was light and variable.... After broadcasting on the UNICOM frequency that I was taking Runway 1 and departing to the north, I entered the runway and proceeded with a normal takeoff. Just after lifting off, I noted an aircraft on takeoff roll on the same runway, but in the opposite direction (Runway 19). I immediately began evasive action by turning right and continuing to climb. The other aircraft continued a straight-ahead takeoff. I had been monitoring the UNICOM frequency and heard the transmissions of other aircraft, but nothing from the aircraft on Runway 19. The primary contributing factor to this event is that the terrain is such that aircraft in the run-up and initial sections of both runways (Runway 01-19) cannot see one another. Under conditions of light and variable winds, plus light traffic, there can be ambiguity about the runway in use, leaving it to the pilots to communicate on UNICOM. In the event of no transmission by one or both aircraft or simultaneous transmissions by the aircraft about to takeoff, you have to rely on see-and-be-seen. This can only apply when you see the full runway, which is not always possible.

### Takeoff vs. Landing

In this report, an aircraft taking off at a non-towered airport conflicted with an aircraft landing on the opposite runway. Among the lessons learned: a little gremlin in the cockpit can cause a big problem.

■ I looked for activity to indicate the active runway. The radio was quiet. Wind was calm.... Runway 5 was downhill, out of the sun, and also in the direction of the wind tee. I decided to use Runway 5.... I made a “...takeoff Runway 5, north departure...” announcement on CTAF, looked and listened for traffic, pulled onto the runway, and

ASRS Alerts Issued in November 2005	
Subject of Alert	No. of Alerts
Aircraft or aircraft equipment	9
Airport facility or procedure	4
ATC procedure or equipment	3
Company policy or maintenance procedure	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

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November 2005 Report Intake	
Air Carrier / Air Taxi Pilots	1905
General Aviation Pilots	785
Controllers	110
Cabin/Mechanics/Military/Other	120
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2920</b>

accelerated.... As the wheels got light, I saw a landing aircraft directly opposite on Runway 23. He was rolling out about 2,000-3,000 feet ahead of me. Since I was almost airborne, I continued the takeoff, lifted off as soon as possible and tracked well right of the runway. I passed the other aircraft as it turned off the runway and radioed an apology. There was no reply. I continued on, wondering all the while how I missed the landing traffic. Radio switches and indications were correct, yet I heard nothing. Then I noticed a small toggle switch at my left knee, the speaker "On-Off" switch that I never use. I toggled it on and heard transmissions.

I did not expect landing traffic and I saw what I expected, a clear path. Later I asked my three year old if he had touched anything. "Yes," he said, "a little switch."

## Landing vs. Takeoff

After coordinating with other aircraft in the pattern regarding their landing sequence, this EMB-145 crew encountered unexpected opposition. The First Officer takes up the narrative as they entered the downwind:

■ ... We entered the pattern for Runway 4 and called our positions (downwind, base, and final) on the CTAF frequency. When we were on short final, a King Air pulled onto Runway 22 and proceeded to takeoff without making any radio calls. We immediately executed a go-around, sidestepping to the right of the departing aircraft. We called on the CTAF frequency, but got no response from the King Air.

Holding in position on the runway at a non-towered airport is a dangerous practice that is strongly discouraged, especially when there is another aircraft on final.

■ I entered a right downwind for Runway 8. It was a busy Saturday morning and I was following a C172 turning base. When the C172 was abeam my right wing, I turned base (and reported my entry and all turns on UNICOM). I turned final, reported my turn, and then a Mooney reported, "...taking the active, Runway 8 at ZZZ." I reiterated that I was on final for Runway 8, but the Mooney went into "position and hold" on the runway while the previously landed C172 continued to roll out and then exit the runway. The Mooney then started its takeoff roll and I realized that we would not be clear of each other. I initiated a go-around and informed the Mooney that I was on the upwind, abeam his right wing. There was no reply. Pilots need to understand that there is no such thing as "position and hold" at an uncontrolled airport. You must wait until aircraft are clear, both in front and behind your takeoff path.

## Go-around vs. Takeoff

Aircraft coming into the VFR pattern from an instrument approach procedure can present unexpected traffic conflicts at a non-towered airport. Aircraft transitioning from IFR to VFR or from a practice approach, may arrive

from an unexpected direction, may cross over the field on a low or missed approach, and may be late to establish communication on the CTAF frequency.

In the following report, an aircraft going around from a practice approach was later than normal getting "in tune" with aircraft in the pattern.

■ I had just completed a touch-and-go and was halfway down the runway, about 50 feet AGL climbing, when my instructor said, "%&\$@" and then, "I have the airplane." Upon releasing the controls, I looked back and saw a King Air about 200 feet behind us making a missed approach. The aircraft passed on our left, high. My instructor asked the pilot's intentions. I do not recall his response. My instructor then asked him if he had seen us on final or heard us on CTAF. He responded that he had tuned his radio to the incorrect frequency and heard no traffic....



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## Meet the Staff



Captain Jimmy Holmes joined the staff of the Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) in 1999 as an Aviation Safety Analyst. Jimmy was a pilot for a major air carrier for 31 years and has accumulated more than 23,000 flight hours in a variety of aircraft, including the DC-6, B-727, DC-10, B-737, B-767, and B-777.

Prior to his airline career, Captain Holmes flew in the U.S. Air Force where he served as a T-29 Mission Pilot for the navigator training program and as a Forward Air Controller flying the O1-E in Vietnam and Laos. Jimmy logged over 400 combat missions earning several citations.

A dedicated putterer, Jimmy spends much of his personal time on woodworking projects ranging from custom furniture to toys.