

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the capabilities of the F-16 radar?

The F-16 has a radar in the nose of the aircraft. This radar is used by the pilot to locate and "lock on" to other aircraft. The radar is limited to forward looking and can only search 120 degrees directly in front of the aircraft. (60 degrees either side). The F-16 radar is also limited by the size of aircraft (i.e. it is easier to "see" a Boeing 737 than a glider). Civil aircraft flying outside of the limits of the radar can go undetected by the pilot, yet still be a conflict in a matter of seconds. The best way to identify a possible conflict is always "see and avoid." Do not assume the F-16 pilot sees you.

2. When does Shaw AFB do most of their flying?

Shaw AFB is the USAF's largest combat F-16 wing. It is home to three squadrons that operate from approximately 0700 (L) in the morning to 2300 (L) at night Monday through Friday and some weekends. Times vary according to day flying, night flying, as well as occasional exercises.

3. Where do Shaw AFB F-16s fly?

Shaw AFB has several military operating areas (MOA's) that the F-16s conduct air-to-air and air-to-ground training sorties. To use these MOA's, Shaw F-16's fly defined departures and recoveries. F-16 pilots practice visual and instrument recoveries into additional local fields, such as McEntire JANG in Columbia, and Charleston AFB. In the Radar pattern, F-16s are traveling at 250 KIAS. Shaw AFB and McEntire JANG have VFR pattern traffic as high as 10,000' AGL practicing emergency procedures.

4. What is the best way to see an F-16 and avoid a midair collision?

The best way to see and avoid any aircraft is to use a proper scan pattern. One technique is to start at one side of the wind screen and allow your eyes to focus every 10-15 degrees. Remember to search above and below the horizon. Traffic conflicts often occur while one aircraft is transiting the flight path of another. You can also detect other aircraft by communicating with Air Traffic Control. Shaw Approach Control is VHF 125.4.