

tower controller who may have radar available, do not assume that constant radar monitoring and complete ATC radar services are being provided.

4-3-3. Traffic Patterns

a. It is recommended that aircraft enter the airport traffic pattern at one of the following altitudes listed below. These altitudes should be maintained unless another traffic pattern altitude is published in the Chart Supplement or unless otherwise required by the applicable distance from cloud criteria (14 CFR Section 91.155). (See FIG 4-3-2 and FIG 4-3-3):

1. Propeller-driven aircraft enter the traffic pattern at 1,000 feet above ground level (AGL).

2. Large and turbine-powered aircraft enter the traffic pattern at an altitude of not less than 1,500 feet AGL or 500 feet above the established pattern altitude.

3. Helicopters operating in the traffic pattern may fly a pattern similar to the fixed-wing aircraft pattern, but at a lower altitude (500 AGL) and closer to the runway. This pattern may be on the opposite side of the runway from fixed-wing traffic when airspeed requires or for practice power-off landings (autorotation) and if local policy permits. Landings not to the runway must avoid the flow of fixed wing traffic.

b. A pilot may vary the size of the traffic pattern depending on the aircraft's performance characteristics. Pilots of en route aircraft should be constantly alert for aircraft in traffic patterns and avoid these areas whenever possible.

c. Unless otherwise indicated, all turns in the traffic pattern must be made to the left, except for helicopters, as applicable.

d. On Sectional, Aeronautical, and VFR Terminal Area Charts, right traffic patterns are indicated at public-use and joint-use airports with the abbreviation "RP" (for Right Pattern), followed by the appropriate runway number(s) at the bottom of the airport data block.

EXAMPLE-
RP 9, 18, 22R

NOTE-

1. *Pilots are encouraged to use the standard traffic pattern. However, those pilots who choose to execute a straight-in approach, maneuvering for and execution of the approach should not disrupt the flow of arriving and departing traffic. Likewise, pilots operating in the traffic pattern should be alert at all times for aircraft executing straight-in approaches.*

REFERENCE-

AC 90-66B, Non-Towered Airport Flight Operations.

2. **RP indicates special conditions exist and refers pilots to the Chart Supplement.*

3. *Right traffic patterns are not shown at airports with full-time control towers.*

e. Wind conditions affect all airplanes in varying degrees. Figure 4-3-4 is an example of a chart used to determine the headwind, crosswind, and tailwind components based on wind direction and velocity relative to the runway. Pilots should refer to similar information provided by the aircraft manufacturer when determining these wind components.