

5-3-8. Holding

a. Whenever an aircraft is cleared to a fix other than the destination airport and delay is expected, it is the responsibility of ATC to issue complete holding instructions (unless the pattern is charted), an EFC time and best estimate of any additional en route/terminal delay.

NOTE—

Only those holding patterns depicted on U.S. government or commercially produced (meeting FAA requirements) low/high altitude en route, and area or STAR charts should be used.

b. If the holding pattern is charted and the controller doesn't issue complete holding instructions, the pilot is expected to hold as depicted on the appropriate chart. When the pattern is charted on the assigned procedure or route being flown, ATC may omit all holding instructions except the charted holding direction and the statement *AS PUBLISHED*; for example, *HOLD EAST AS PUBLISHED*. ATC must always issue complete holding instructions when pilots request them.

c. If no holding pattern is charted and holding instructions have not been issued, the pilot should ask ATC for holding instructions prior to reaching the fix. This procedure will eliminate the possibility of an aircraft entering a holding pattern other than that desired by ATC. If unable to obtain holding instructions prior to reaching the fix (due to frequency congestion, stuck microphone, etc.), then enter a standard pattern on the course on which the aircraft approached the fix and request further clearance as soon as possible. In this event, the altitude/flight level of the aircraft at the clearance limit will be protected so that separation will be provided as required.

d. When an aircraft is 3 minutes or less from a clearance limit and a clearance beyond the fix has not been received, the pilot is expected to start a speed reduction so that the aircraft will cross the fix, initially, at or below the maximum holding airspeed.

e. When no delay is expected, the controller should issue a clearance beyond the fix as soon as possible and, whenever possible, at least 5 minutes before the aircraft reaches the clearance limit.

f. Pilots should report to ATC the time and altitude/flight level at which the aircraft reaches the clearance limit and report leaving the clearance limit.

NOTE—

In the event of two-way communications failure, pilots are required to comply with 14 CFR Section 91.185.

g. When holding at a VOR station, pilots should begin the turn to the outbound leg at the time of the first complete reversal of the to/from indicator.

h. Patterns at the most generally used holding fixes are depicted (charted) on U.S. Government or commercially produced (meeting FAA requirements) Low or High Altitude En Route, Area, Departure Procedure, and STAR Charts. Pilots are expected to hold in the pattern depicted unless specifically advised otherwise by ATC.

NOTE—

Holding patterns that protect for a maximum holding airspeed other than the standard may be depicted by an icon, unless otherwise depicted. The icon is a standard holding pattern symbol (racetrack) with the airspeed restriction shown in the center. In other cases, the airspeed restriction will be depicted next to the standard holding pattern symbol.

REFERENCE—

AIM, Para 5-3-8 j2, Holding.

i. An ATC clearance requiring an aircraft to hold at a fix where the pattern is not charted will include the following information: (See FIG 5-3-2.)

1. Direction of holding from the fix in terms of the eight cardinal compass points (i.e., N, NE, E, SE, etc.).
2. Holding fix (the fix may be omitted if included at the beginning of the transmission as the clearance limit).
3. Radial, course, bearing, airway or route on which the aircraft is to hold.

4. Leg length in miles if DME or RNAV is to be used (leg length will be specified in minutes on pilot request or if the controller considers it necessary).