

Radio calls in two honest classes. **Quoted** calls are the sources' own example transmissions, word for word, cited and byte-checked. **Convention** calls are the ones the sources never script — composed on the AIM's initial-contact format and labeled as convention. The two classes never share a style. Convention — composed on the AIM 4-2-3 format; the sources do not script this call.

1 · The format — one shape for every call FAA GUIDANCE

Four answers, in order: **who you are calling, who you are, where you are, what you want.** Every convention call on this sheet is composed on this rule and on nothing else.

"Use the following format: Name of the facility being called; Your full aircraft identification as filed in the flight plan [...] When operating on an airport surface, state your position. The type of message to follow or your request if it is short; and The word "Over" if required."
AIM 4-2-3, Contact Procedures

2 · First contact — the format FAA GUIDANCE

QUOTED First call when the message is not short — name them, name yourself, and let the facility answer before the details.

"New York Radio, Mooney Three One One Echo."
AIM 4-2-3

3 · Towered field — departure TECHNIQUE

QUOTED The AIM's own ground call — an IFR clearance pickup, but the shape is the point: facility, full call sign, position on the field, request.

"Columbia Ground, Cessna Three One Six Zero Foxtrot, south ramp, I-F-R Memphis."
AIM 4-2-3

CONVENTION The everyday VFR taxi call, composed on the same shape — facility, who you are, where you are on the field, what you want.

Runup Ground, Skyhawk Six One Two Four Papa, north ramp with information Bravo, VFR to the southeast, ready to taxi.
Convention — AIM 4-2-3 format

CONVENTION At the hold-short line, run-up complete — who you are, where you are, what you want to do after takeoff.

Runup Tower, Skyhawk Six One Two Four Papa, holding short Runway Two Two, ready for departure, departing to the southeast.
Convention — AIM 4-2-3 format

4 · Towered field — arrival TECHNIQUE

CONVENTION Calling approach inbound to a busier field — position, altitude, intentions, and the ATIS letter in one call.

Runup Approach, Skyhawk Six One Two Four Papa, one five miles northeast, three thousand five hundred, landing Runup with information Delta.
Convention — AIM 4-2-3 format

CONVENTION Inbound to the tower — who, where, altitude, and what you want.

Runup Tower, Skyhawk Six One Two Four Papa, one zero miles south, two thousand five hundred, with information Delta, inbound full stop.
Convention — AIM 4-2-3 format

CONVENTION Down and off the runway, sent to ground — where you are and where you want to taxi.

Runup Ground, Skyhawk Six One Two Four Papa, clear of Runway Two Two at Alpha Three, taxi to the north ramp.
Convention — AIM 4-2-3 format

5 · Asking for flight following FAA GUIDANCE

QUOTED The AIM's short request — note the service's name in the AIM's own examples is "V-F-R traffic advisories".

"Miami Center, Baron Five Six Three Hotel, request V-F-R traffic advisories."
AIM 4-2-3

QUOTED The same request with position and altitude folded in — one transmission carrying everything the controller needs.

"Atlanta Center, Duke Four One Romeo, request V-F-R traffic advisories, Twenty Northwest Rome, seven thousand five hundred, over."
AIM 4-2-3

6 · Non-towered — announcing on the CTAF FAA GUIDANCE

QUOTED Self-announcing inbound at a non-towered field — airport name first and last, position, altitude, intentions. The parentheses are the AIM's own fill-in slots.

"Strawn traffic, Apache Two Two Five Zulu, (position), (altitude), (descending) or entering downwind/base/final (as appropriate) runway one seven full stop, touch-and-go, Strawn."
AIM 4-1-9

QUOTED Taxiing out at a non-towered field — announce before you move.

"Strawn traffic, Queen Air Seven One Five Five Bravo (location on airport) taxiing to runway two six Strawn."
AIM 4-1-9

QUOTED Departing the runway and leaving the pattern — say which way you are going, and how high.

"Strawn traffic, Queen Air Seven One Five Five Bravo departing runway two six, Departing the pattern to the (direction), climbing to (altitude) Strawn."
AIM 4-1-9

QUOTED Down and clear — the pattern hears the runway is free.

"Strawn traffic Apache Two Two Five Zulu clear of runway one seven Strawn."
AIM 4-1-9

QUOTED The AC's self-announce example — aircraft type included, to help other pilots pick you out of the pattern.

"MIDWEST TRAFFIC, TWIN COMMANDER FIVE ONE ROMEO FOXTROT TEN MILES NORTHEAST"
AC 90-66C ¶ 9.8.1

7 · What not to say — in the sources' own words FAA GUIDANCE

Three habits the sources call out by name — quoted, so the ban is visibly theirs and not ours.

"Pilots stating, "Traffic in the area, please advise" is not a recognized Self-Announce Position and/or Intention phrase and should not be used under any condition."
AIM 4-1-9

"To avoid misunderstandings, pilots should avoid using the words "to" and "for" whenever possible. These words might be confused with runway numbers or altitudes."
AC 90-66C ¶ 10.3

"Pilots should not broadcast their assumed sequence for landing when transmitting their position in the pattern. For example, "N1234 downwind, number 3 for landing." This is the responsibility of ATC at towered airports."
AC 90-66C ¶ 10.1

8 · The words, as the glossary defines them FAA GUIDANCE

"MAYDAY- The international radiotelephony distress signal. When repeated three times, it indicates imminent and grave danger and that immediate assistance is requested."
P/CG, letter M

"PAN-PAN- The international radio-telephony urgency signal. When repeated three times, indicates uncertainty or alert followed by the nature of the urgency."
P/CG, letter P

"READ BACK- Repeat my message back to me."
P/CG, letter R

"ROGER- I have received all of your last transmission. It should not be used to answer a question requiring a yes or a no answer."
P/CG, letter R

"SAY AGAIN- Used to request a repeat of the last transmission. Usually specifies transmission or portion thereof not understood or received; e.g., "Say again all after ABRAM VOR."
P/CG, letter S

“STAND BY- Means the controller or pilot must pause for a few seconds, usually to attend to other duties of a higher priority. Also means to wait as in “stand by for clearance.” The caller should reestablish contact if a delay is lengthy. “Stand by” is not an approval or denial.”
P/CG, letter S

“UNABLE- Indicates inability to comply with a specific instruction, request, or clearance.”
P/CG, letter U

“WILCO- I have received your message, understand it, and will comply with it.”
P/CG, letter W

Sources, kept apart. Quoted calls and glossary entries are verbatim from the frozen AIM chapter-section pages, from AC 90-66C (Status: Active, Date issued: 2023-06-06, cancels 90-66B — established from the [faa.gov](https://www.faa.gov/document-information) Document Information page, retrieved 2026-09-01), and from the Pilot/Controller Glossary; every artifact is frozen and hashed in the repository. Retrieved 2026-08-31 (AIM chap4) / 2026-09-01 (AC 90-66C, P/CG letters). Convention calls are ours: composed on the AIM’s format, scripted by no source, and labeled so on every card. This is a study aid — verify against the primary source before you act on it. Who you are talking to — the system behind the words — is on the ATC System sheet at runuplab.com/printables/atc-system.