

What FSS still does and how to reach it — the contact points first, then briefings, the preflight-action rule, VFR flight plans, and the full PIREP encoding table. Rules quote the regulation, guidance quotes the AIM, and the phone-and-website facts carry a verification date instead of quote marks — three kinds of fact, never confused.

1 · Reaching Flight Service FAA GUIDANCE

Online: One address for briefings and flight plans — the AIM names both the site and its operator. (The stray space before the period is the frozen page's own link markup, kept verbatim.)

“Pilots can access Leidos Flight Services via the Internet at <http://www.1800wxbrief.com> . Pilots can receive preflight weather data and file VFR and IFR flight plans.”
AIM 7-1-2

Phone: One number for the lower 48, Hawaii, and the territories; a separate number for Alaska.

“To contact Flight Service in the CONUS, Hawaii, and U.S. territories; call 1-800-WX-BRIEF (1-800-992-7433); in Alaska call 1-833-AK-BRIEF (1-833-252-7433).”
AIM 7-1-2

Radio, en route: The AIM's default when nothing better is published — most Flight Service facilities share one common frequency.

“If you are in doubt as to what frequency to use, 122.2 MHz is assigned to the majority of FSSs as a common en route simplex frequency.”
AIM 4-2-14

Where the frequencies live: Facility frequencies are published, not memorized — the Chart Supplement carries them; the Alaska advisory example is the AIM's own.

“FSSs and Supplemental Weather Service Locations (SWSL) are allocated frequencies for different functions; for example, in Alaska, certain FSSs provide Local Airport Advisory on 123.6 MHz or other frequencies which can be found in the Chart Supplement.”
AIM 4-2-14

The first radio call: Say which frequency you are on and where you are — Flight Service monitors several. The scripted example is the AIM's.

“In order to expedite communications, state the frequency being used and the aircraft location during initial callup. [...] Dayton radio, November One Two Three Four Five on one two two point two, over Springfield V-O-R, over.”
AIM 4-2-14

CHECKRIDE TRAP TECHNIQUE OPERATIONAL FACT — VERIFIED 2026-09-01

The live service. 1800wxbrief.com answers as Leidos Flight Service and was serving its briefing and flight-plan portal when checked.
HTTPS GET of <https://www.1800wxbrief.com/Website/> returned 200 with Leidos Flight Service branding (browser-UA curl; snapshot hashed in the provenance header).

CHECKRIDE TRAP TECHNIQUE OPERATIONAL FACT — VERIFIED 2026-09-01

The number, as published today. The phone number on the live site matches the one the AIM prints: 800-WX-BRIEF (800-992-7433).
The retrieved home page's help band reads: To receive flight plan and weather briefing services from a Specialist, call Flight Service: 800-WX-Brief (800-992-7433).

2 · Preflight briefings — the three types FAA GUIDANCE

“Three basic types of preflight briefings (Standard, Abbreviated, and Outlook) are available to serve the pilot's specific needs. Pilots should specify to the briefer the type of briefing they want, along with their appropriate background information.”
AIM 7-1-5

“Pilots can receive a regulatory compliant briefing without contacting Flight Service. Pilots are encouraged to use automated resources and review AC 91-92, Pilot's Guide to a Preflight Briefing, for more information.”
AIM 7-1-5

Standard: Your first full briefing for a flight — nothing received yet.

“You should request a Standard Briefing any time you are planning a flight and you have not received a previous briefing or have not received preliminary information through online resources.”
AIM 7-1-5

Abbreviated: You already have most of it — update a previous briefing, or ask for one or two items.

“Request an Abbreviated Briefing when you need information to supplement mass disseminated data, update a previous briefing, or when you need only one or two specific items.”
AIM 7-1-5

Outlook: Departure is six or more hours out — planning data only, never the final word.

“You should request an Outlook Briefing whenever your proposed time of departure is six or more hours from the time of the briefing. The briefer will provide available forecast data applicable to the proposed flight. This type of briefing is provided for planning purposes only. You should obtain a Standard or Abbreviated Briefing prior to departure in order to obtain such items as adverse conditions, current conditions, updated forecasts, winds aloft and NOTAMs, etc.”
AIM 7-1-5

The Standard Briefing, in the AIM's own order: 1 Adverse Conditions. 2 VFR Flight Not Recommended. 3 Synopsis. 4 Current Conditions. 5 En Route Forecast. 6 Destination Forecast. 7 Winds Aloft. 8 Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs). 9 ATC Delays.

“When VFR flight is proposed and sky conditions or visibilities are present or forecast, surface or aloft, that, in the briefer's judgment, would make flight under VFR doubtful, the briefer will describe the conditions, describe the affected locations, and use the phrase “VFR flight not recommended.” This recommendation is advisory in nature. The final decision as to whether the flight can be conducted safely rests solely with the pilot.”
AIM 7-1-5

3 · Preflight action — the rule under all of it REGULATION

“Each pilot in command shall, before beginning a flight, become familiar with all available information concerning that flight. This information must include—
(a) For a flight under IFR or a flight not in the vicinity of an airport, weather reports and forecasts, fuel requirements, alternatives available if the planned flight cannot be completed, and any known traffic delays of which the pilot in command has been advised by ATC;
(b) For any flight, runway lengths at airports of intended use, and the following takeoff and landing distance information:”
§ 91.103 — Preflight action

4 · VFR flight plans — file, activate, close FAA GUIDANCE

File: Not required for most VFR flying in the continental U.S. — and still worth doing every time, because an active flight plan is what puts search and rescue on a clock.

- “Within the continental U.S., a VFR flight plan is not normally required.”
- AIM 5-1-5

- “It is strongly recommended that a VFR flight plan be filed with a Flight Service Station or equivalent flight plan filing service.”
- AIM 5-1-5

- “Activating the flight plan will ensure that you receive VFR Search and Rescue services.”
- AIM 5-1-5

CHECKRIDE TRAP **TECHNIQUE** Activate

(open): Filing is not opening. Nothing is watching for you until the plan is activated — and the tower will not do it for you. An unopened proposal quietly expires.

- “Pilots are responsible for activating flight plans with a Flight Service Station. Control tower personnel do not automatically activate VFR flight plans.”
- AIM 5-1-5

- “VFR flight plan proposals are normally retained for two hours following the proposed time of departure.”
- AIM 5-1-5

CHECKRIDE TRAP **TECHNIQUE** Close:

Closing is yours alone — no tower closes a VFR flight plan for you. The AIM’s own timer is half an hour past your ETA; after that, search and rescue starts looking. (The “1 / 2” spacing is the frozen page’s stacked fraction, kept verbatim.)

- “A pilot is responsible for ensuring that his/her VFR or DVFR flight plan is canceled. You should close your flight plan with the nearest FSS, or if one is not available, you may request any ATC facility to relay your cancellation to the FSS.”
- AIM 5-1-14

- “If you fail to report or cancel your flight plan within 1 / 2 hour after your ETA, search and rescue procedures are started.”
- AIM 5-1-14

5 · PIREPs — reporting what you found **FAA GUIDANCE**

- “FAA air traffic facilities are required to solicit PIREPs when the following conditions are reported or forecast: ceilings at or below 5,000 feet; visibility at or below 5 miles (surface or aloft); thunderstorms and related phenomena; icing of light degree or greater; turbulence of moderate degree or greater; wind shear and reported or forecast volcanic ash clouds.”
- AIM 7-1-18

- “PIREPs should be given to the ground facility with which communications are established; i.e., FSS, ARTCC, or terminal ATC.”
- AIM 7-1-18

- “Items 1 through 6 are included in all transmitted PIREPs along with one or more of items 7 through 13. Although the PIREP should be as complete and concise as possible, pilots should not be overly concerned with strict format or phraseology. The important thing is that the information is relayed so other pilots may benefit from your observation.”
- AIM 7-1-18

AIM TBL 7-1-18 — PIREP Element Code Chart, transcribed cell for cell

#	PIREP element	Code	Contents
1	3-letter station identifier	XXX	Nearest weather reporting location to the reported phenomenon
2	Report type	UA or UUA	Routine or Urgent PIREP
3	Location	/OV	In relation to a VOR
4	Time	/TM	Coordinated Universal Time
5	Altitude	/FL	Essential for turbulence and icing reports
6	Type Aircraft	/TP	Essential for turbulence and icing reports
7	Sky cover	/SK	Cloud height and coverage (sky clear, few, scattered, broken, or overcast)
8	Weather	/WX	Flight visibility, precipitation, restrictions to visibility, etc.
9	Temperature	/TA	Degrees Celsius
10	Wind	/WV	Direction in degrees magnetic north and speed in knots
11	Turbulence	/TB	See AIM paragraph 7-1-21
12	Icing	/IC	See AIM paragraph 7-1-19
13	Remarks	/RM	For reporting elements not included or to clarify previously reported items

Worked example — the AIM’s own:

KCMH UA /OV APE 230010/TM 1516/FL085/TP BE20/SK BKN065/WX FV03SM HZ FU/TA 20/TB LGT

- “One zero miles southwest of Appleton VOR; time 1516 UTC; altitude eight thousand five hundred; aircraft type BE200; bases of the broken cloud layer is six thousand five hundred; flight visibility 3 miles with haze and smoke; air temperature 20 degrees Celsius; light turbulence.”
- AIM 7-1-18 (the AIM’s own decode)

Sources, kept apart. The rule is 14 CFR at eCFR issue date 2026-08-24. Briefing types, flight-plan practice, and the PIREP table quote the AIM — guidance, not regulation. Retrieved 2026-08-31 (14 CFR and AIM pages); operational facts live-verified 2026-09-01. Every quoted artifact is frozen and hashed in the repository. Operational facts — the website, the phone numbers, the live service — are dated, not hash-gated, because they can change without notice: check them before you rely on them. This is a study aid — verify against the primary source before you act on it. Decode raw reports at runuplab.com/tools/metar; the navlog twin of the preflight-action rule is at runuplab.com/printables/navlog.