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YOU ARE CLEARED FOR...

WHAT IT MEANS IN THE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT BY JASON BLAIR

CLEARED TO LAND—A SIMPLE CLEARANCE THAT MOST OF US KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH. But in the flight training process, there are a few other clearances that might be confused between ATC and pilots. The key is to be clear about what you want to do, know what ATC expects you to do, and ensure your communication and their clearance matches your and their expectations.

As CFIs we use some of these requests and clearances to help coordinate training activities—it might be to keep a student focused on a landing, teaching the go-around process, demonstrating or testing aborted takeoff procedures, or conducting instrument approach procedures. As we coordinate these, it is

EACH OF THESE CLEARANCES REQUESTED BY A CFI OR PILOT, OR ASSIGNED BY ATC, HAS SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS ASSOCIATED. DOING SOMETHING ELSE MIGHT REPRESENT A BREAK OF A CLEARANCE AND CERTAINLY CAN RESULT IN A DEGRADATION OF SAFETY IF THE EXPECTATION OF ONE ACTION IS NOT WHAT ACTUALLY OCCURS

important for us to be clear on what we are doing, what we expect, and what ATC has actually cleared us to do or expects us to do.

Let's dig into a few common instructional environment runway-related clearances we might use.

CLEARED TO LAND

It's simple, it means you are cleared to land. It does not preclude you from going around if there is a reason to do so, but it also isn't a clearance for a touch-and-go, stop-and-go, or anything else creative you might consider. It means you are cleared to land and exit the runway or go around prior to landing (which is always an option if needed).

If you want to do something else, it's time to consider one of the following options.

CLEARED TO TOUCH AND GO

A commonly used item in training is the *touch and go* where the pilot (and potentially their CFI in the right seat) conducts a landing and then without coming to a full stop takes back off. Most commonly used during multiple trips in the pattern, the touch and go allows for a little time savings in the landing training process.

When requesting or cleared for touch-and-go landings, ATC expects the aircraft to land, keep rolling, and take back off. They may be counting on this for the timing of any aircraft behind them in the pattern and how close they are allowing separation between aircraft.



CLEARED TO STOP AND GO

Somewhere between a *cleared to land* and a *touch and go*, the cleared to *stop and go* is an option ATC may grant to allow the aircraft to come to a full stop before taking back off. This is most commonly used in the training environment when a pilot will need to take the time to reconfigure the aircraft for a specific takeoff demonstration or just wants to have a little time between the landing and the actual takeoff procedure. This is obviously most advisable for CFIs to have their students perform only on runways of longer lengths that offer enough safety margin to completely land, stop, and then conduct a takeoff as required.

The stop and go requires ATC to commit the resource of the runway to the aircraft for a longer period of time and may not be manageable in a busy traffic pattern environment. If this is the case, a pilot seeking a stop and go might find themselves cleared to land or for a stop and go to minimize their time on



an active runway. If this is the case, ATC may need to clear you off the runway in a timely manner to avoid separation concerns with other traffic.

If you plan on landing and actually bringing the aircraft to a full stop for reconfiguration for takeoff, this is the clearance you want. If you haven't been issued this clearance, don't do it.

CLEARED FOR THE OPTION

Kind of the dealer's choice of landing clearances, ATC giving you the *cleared for the option* allows you to do what you choose. You might choose to make the landing a full stop and exit the runway,

BE CLEAR WITH WHAT YOU WANT, AND IF IN DOUBT OF WHAT ATC HAS ISSUED, ASK FOR CLARIFICATION.

you might want to do a full stop and then take off or make it a touch and go. This allows the pilot or the CFI to make the decision based on how the landing goes.

A good use for an option clearance on a landing is when a CFI might call it a day if the student makes a great landing or try another one if they need to go around.

When ATC clears you for takeoff, they expect you to keep going. If you intend to as an instructor, or as a pilot for practice, abort that takeoff for anything other than a real emergency, you should request a takeoff option clearance.

Some ATC facilities are not as familiar with this as others. But in high-density training locations, this may be more familiar a request. Don't be surprised if ATC asks, "What is it you want?" If questioned, explain that you want to abort a takeoff and then continue the takeoff.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU ARE ASKING FOR OR WHAT ATC IS EXPECTING OF YOU IS CRITICAL TO COMPLIANCE WITH CLEARANCES AND MAINTAINING SAFETY

It is important that ATC knows that this is what you want to do because it will take extra time on the runway compared with a standard takeoff clearance. If you are a CFI planning on failing that engine on your multiengine student during the takeoff, this is the clearance you need to request.

CLEARED TO LAND-HOLD SHORT OF RUNWAY XX

More commonly used at larger airports, the clearance for a landing that requires holding

The gist—you get to choose and ATC has enough spacing to let you do just that.

CLEARED LOW APPROACH ONLY

Most commonly used when flying practice approaches, *cleared for the low approach* only is issued when you will perform a missed approach and are not cleared to land.

Many air traffic control towers will issue this clearance when you have told them you will be going missed, when you are flying an approach to a runway that is not their active runway, or sometimes when there are other vehicles on the runway to which you are flying an approach. It might be something as simple as an airport vehicle doing runway light inspections in the morning while flying an approach that restricts you to flying to a limited descent altitude at which you will be expected to "go missed."

Many CFIs will have instrument students or instrument proficiency clients fly approaches to runways with no intention of landing when they need to fly a particular type of approach or need to demonstrate or practice a missed approach procedure.

In these cases, ATC may issue a low-approach-only clearance either to a specific altitude, to the

short of a runway is less frequently used in the training environment but possible and should be taught to students.

A key factor of this is that it doesn't need to be accepted by a pilot if issued by ATC. Designed to offer ATC the ability to clear aircraft to operate (or approach) crossing runways, a *cleared to land, hold short of runway XX* is issued when there is sufficient distance for an aircraft to land and not cross a runway on which another aircraft may be approaching or landing. This is a clearance to land. Not a clearance to touch and go, stop and go, or anything else. If you accept this, ATC expects you to stop short of the crossing runway assigned. If you can't do that, don't accept this clearance.

Each of these clearances requested by a CFI or pilot, or assigned by ATC, has specific expectations associated. Doing something else might represent a break of a clearance and certainly can result in a degradation of safety if the expectation of one action is not what actually occurs.

Be clear with what you want, and if in doubt of what ATC has issued, ask for clarification. All of these have specific utility to an instructor (or a designated pilot examiner when conducting

minimum descent altitude or decision height, or even to a point such as a two-mile final approach fix at which the aircraft will be expected to go missed.

A low-approach-only clearance helps ATC separate other traffic or an aircraft from ground operations. It can be useful for a CFI seeking to conduct approaches to the non-active runway for practice or demonstration purposes.

CLEARED FOR THE TAKEOFF OPTION

Less common in most training operations in single-engine aircraft is the request for a takeoff-option-clearance, most frequently used

ALL OF THESE CLEARANCES HAVE SPECIFIC UTILITY TO AN INSTRUCTOR (OR A DESIGNATED PILOT EXAMINER WHEN CONDUCTING A PRACTICAL TEST) AND CAN BE USED IN THE TRAINING PROCESS TO ENHANCE SAFETY OR EXPEDITE SOME TRAINING OBJECTIVES.

when a CFI wants to simulate the failure of an engine on the takeoff roll. Coordinating this at a towered airport with ATC is important for a CFI so ATC doesn't expect you to continue your takeoff when you are going to be potentially delaying on the runway for a period of time.

a practical test) and can be used in the training process to enhance safety or expedite some training objectives. Understanding what you are asking for or what ATC is expecting of you is critical to compliance with clearances and maintaining safety. Know what you want, know what ATC expects of you, and when in doubt, go around if needed.

Jason Blair is an active single and multiengine instructor and an FAA designated pilot examiner with more than 6,000 hours total time, 3,000 hours of instruction given, and 3000 hours in aircraft as a DPE. As examiner, he has issued more than 2,000 pilot certificates. He has worked for and continues to work with multiple aviation associations focusing on pilot training and testing. His experience as a pilot and instructor spans nearly 20 years and includes more than 100 makes and models of aircraft flown. Jason Blair has published works in many aviation publications with a focus on training and safety.

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