

FAA News



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Contact: Arlene Murray or Jim Peters at 718-553-3015

FACT SHEET

FAA Air Traffic Control Radar Operations at T.F. Green Airport

The Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) facility at T.F. Green Airport uses both radar and non-radar capabilities to provide air traffic control services to aircraft arriving, departing, or just flying through the facility's delegated airspace.

DEPARTURES

TRACON controllers accept and transfer control of aircraft through various manual and automated means. Controllers grant "Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) releases" of aircraft departing from T. F. Green Airport and from its satellite airports. Controllers also grant "Visual Flight Rules (VFR) releases" off T. F. Green Airport.

Instrument flight rules govern how a flight is conducted when using instruments to navigate airspace under certain weather conditions.

Visual flight rules govern how a flight is conducted when flying visually and using points of interest, instead of instruments, to navigate.

If an aircraft is departing the TRACON's area of jurisdiction, it will transfer control responsibility of all IFR aircraft and VFR aircraft (when workload permits) to the appropriate adjoining radar facility.

ARRIVALS

Radar services for VFR arrivals, with the exception of VFR arrivals to T. F. Green Airport, are terminated approximately 10 to 12 nautical miles from the airport of intended landing and the aircraft are instructed to contact the next appropriate frequency.

VFR arrival aircraft at T. F. Green airport initiate radio contact with TRACON controllers and are told where to enter the T. F. Green Airport traffic pattern and are then sequenced in with arriving IFR aircraft. Various factors will determine at what point VFR aircraft will enter the traffic pattern. The factors include the initial reported location of the VFR aircraft and other traffic already established or anticipated to be in the traffic pattern at T. F. Green Airport.

Radar services for IFR aircraft are provided to a full landing. IFR arrivals can be placed on an instrument approach – a series of predetermined maneuvers for the orderly transfer of an aircraft under instrument flight conditions from the beginning of the initial approach to a landing or point from which a landing may be made visually, or if a landing is not completed, to a position at which holding can occur.

In cases where weather conditions permit, a visual approach to the airport/runway can be approved – an approach conducted on an IFR flight plan, which authorizes the pilot to proceed visually and clear of clouds to the airport of intended landing. The pilot must at all times have either the airport or the preceding aircraft in sight. This approach must be authorized and under the control of the appropriate air traffic control facility. Reported weather at the airport of intended landing must be ceiling at or above 1,000 feet and visibility of 3 miles or greater. This type of approach does not have a clearly defined flight path due to the fact that the pilot must remain clear of clouds.

Another type of approach that an IFR aircraft can execute is a contact approach – an approach in which an aircraft on an IFR flight plan, with air traffic control authorization, operating clear of clouds with at least 1-mile visibility and a reasonable expectation of continuing to the airport of intended landing in those conditions, may deviate from the instrument approach procedure and proceed to the airport of intended landing by visual reference to the surface. This approach will only be authorized when requested by the pilot and the reported ground visibility at the airport of intended landing is at least 1 statute mile.

OVERFLIGHTS

Some aircraft only fly through TRACON airspace. There are called over flights. As they fly through the airspace, controllers may be required to issue altitude and/or route amendments to these aircraft.

TRACON controllers accept and transfer control of aircraft through various manual and automated means. The facility has agreement with joining air traffic facilities on how each facility we accept and transfer control of aircraft that will enter or depart their designated area.

