

NEW VFR DEPARTURE INSTRUCTIONS AT COS EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 2010

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To:

THIS MESSAGE IS FOR INTENDED FOR DISTRIBUTION. PLEASE FORWARD TO YOUR FRIENDS, GROUPS, ETC....

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Pilots, Friends, Bonanza Pilots (some need extra help (not all just 1 or 2 that I'm used to working)),
COS users...

Effective March 1, 2010, COS ATCT will implement new VFR departure procedures.

I will try to NOT make this confusing...

First, in my previous email, I didn't quite explain it well with regards to the MVA (Minimum Vectoring Altitude) and I got a few emails and phone calls asking about this. All airspace in ATC is broken up into "parts" and each "part" has a minimum vectoring altitude assigned to it. Here at COS, with the terrain to the west, we have many different "parts" thus resulting in different MVA's.

There is a piece of sky to the WEST and NW of COS that has a MVA of 11,000 feet MSL. By rule, ATC cannot vector an aircraft into an MVA if ATC assigns an altitude to an aircraft BELOW the MVA. So in our case, we currently issue "AT OR BELOW 8,000" and have you flying westbound. Right now I can vector you for appx 2 miles west before you enter a higher MVA. Sometimes you here us on the radio say "(callsign), Maintain VFR" What this means is that the altitude is at the pilots discretion in VFR conditions.

Also, one of the MVA's to the NORTH has now moved closer to COS and has changed from 8,000 to 8,500. Thus, you will see below a change to the initial altitude for a departure to the NE, 00V, East Practice Area, points east, points SE and towards PUB or overflying PUB.

As of March 1st, the new MVA's take effect and I cannot have you at 8,000 feet when you're two miles west on a vector.

So what we have done is removed the altitudes in the clearance. We have made it much better for pilots/airplanes going SW clockwise thru NORTH when you depart COS. We will still issue you a vector when you depart but you will not be assigned an altitude. So here's what we've done....

If you depart: (it doesn't matter which runway you depart)

COS Airport and your on course heading will be 170 clockwise to 010, you will be instructed by Clearance Delivery to "Fly Runway Heading, Maintain VFR, Dept Frequency 124.0, squawk 46xx" When we say "Maintain VFR" the altitude is at pilots discretion.

COS Airport and your on course heading will be 011 clockwise to 169, you will be instructed by Clearance Delivery to "Fly Runway Heading, Maintain VFR at or below 8,500, Dept Frequency 124.0, squawk 46xx"

Also, I mention above "on course heading..." ATC operates with airspace. So the tower has its own airspace and then COS approach has airspace. The tower will turn you to a heading in the general direction of your flight so you can be handed off to departure. Example, you might want to go down HWY 115 to 1V6 and you're departing RWY 17R. The tower may turn you to a heading of 260 and tell you to contact departure. The tower has the responsibility to separate arrivals and departures (VFR) within 5 miles of the airport. So the tower might vector a little more than you are used to seeing.

Please please keep your scan outside the aircraft going as much as possible. There will be arrivals approaching from over Butts Army Airfield, from the SW, West, Academy, etc... Also, with regards to the USAFA aircraft. They have a route that departs USAFA, overflies "DEPOT" (HOME DEPOT at

Academy and Woodmen) and then proceeds SOUTH climbing to 9,000 feet MSL to a point appx 3 miles NW of COS and then they will fly directly over COS airport eastbound at 9,000. On the reverse, they will be USAFA aircraft flying back to USAFA over the airport at 9,500 westbound to a point near Patty Jewett Golf Course and then make a turn and start a descent into the USAFA. My point in all of this is to hopefully make you aware that the WEST side of COS airport, over downtown, Garden of the Gods, SW of COS, etc.. can be a congested place for traffic!

I hope this explains what we are doing and why. I tried to leave out a lot of the “why’s” and technical stuff that we apply for these rules but I wanted to at least try to explain why the changes and help you have the information before the effective date. Expect controllers to still say the at or below 8,000 but every controller is being taught and briefed on this now. Some of us have been saying at or below 8,000 for 15 years or more. I expect pilots to do the same so we’ll all work together and get things right.

We are a team (ATC & Pilots) out there and I can honestly say that working at COS has been one of the best environments to work in out of the four ATC facilities I’ve been at in my career. If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to call me at 719.651.8476 or drop me an email back. If you have any complaints, please know that our complaint department is permanently closed and is no longer accepting these messages. ;)

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in working with ATC and making the skies safe for all to enjoy! If you’re interested in seeing what the “bible” for Controllers is, here’s a link to the newest version of the 7110.65 or as we call it, “the point sixty-five.”
<http://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Order/ATC.pdf>

Regards,
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C YA!