

IMC Question Of The Month

In the air, ATC advises you about your amended IFR clearance due to the closed airspace ahead and emergency action in progress. You state that you are ready to copy and you write down all elements of your new route. You read back complete clearance, and then your radio stops working right after your last sentence of your read-back. Is your new clearance valid? How should you proceed?

Answer / Radek

Legally your new clearance is not valid until it is read back and acknowledged by the controller with “readback correct.” There is no clear answer to the second question. When legally you should proceed with using your original clearance using all NORDO (no radio) procedures, it wouldn't be prudent knowing the reason for the amended clearance. You could “squawk emergency” and proceed with your new clearance.

Answer / Jim

- Nothing says “readback correct” is required.
- JO 7110.65W 2-4-3 says

Ensure pilots acknowledge all Air Traffic Clearances and ATC Instructions. When a pilot reads back an Air Traffic Clearance or ATC Instruction:

- a. Ensure that items read back are correct.
- b. Ensure the read back of hold short instructions, whether a part of taxi instructions or a LAHSO clearance.
- c. Ensure pilots use call signs and/or registration numbers in any read back acknowledging an Air Traffic Clearance or ATC Instruction.

NOTE—

1. ATC Clearance/Instruction Read Back guidance for pilots in the AIM states:

a. Although pilots should read back the “numbers,” unless otherwise required by procedure or controller request, pilots may acknowledge clearances, control instructions, or other information by using “Wilco,” “Roger,” “Affirmative,” or other words or remarks with their aircraft identification.

b. Altitudes contained in charted procedures, such as departure procedures, instrument approaches, etc., need not be read back unless they are specifically stated by the controller.

c. Initial read back of a taxi, departure or landing clearance should include the runway assignment, including left, right, center, etc. if applicable.

2. Until a pilot acknowledges a controller’s clearance or instruction, a controller cannot know if a pilot will comply with the clearance or remain as previously cleared.

EXAMPLE—

"Climbing to Flight Level three three zero, United Twelve" or "November Five Charlie Tango, roger, cleared to land runway four left."