

# SESSION 33: ATC CLEARANCES — PIC EMERGENCY AUTHORITY AND DEVIATION RIGHTS

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1. Under 14 CFR §91.3(a), the pilot in command is:
  - A. Directly responsible for, and the final authority as to, the operation of the aircraft
  - B. Subordinate to ATC in all decisions
  - C. Required to obtain ATC approval for every action
  - D. Relieved of responsibility once a clearance is accepted
  
2. Under §91.3(b), in an in-flight emergency requiring immediate action, the PIC may:
  - A. Only act with ATC's prior approval
  - B. Take no action without a co-pilot's concurrence
  - C. Deviate from any rule of Part 91 to the extent required to meet that emergency
  - D. Deviate only from altitude assignments
  
3. Under §91.3(c), a PIC who deviates from a rule under emergency authority must:
  - A. File a new flight plan within 24 hours
  - B. Surrender their certificate for review
  - C. Notify the nearest FSDO within 48 hours automatically
  - D. Send a written report to the Administrator upon request
  
4. The emergency deviation authority of §91.3(b) is best understood as:

- A. A license to disregard safety
- B. Applicable only to commercial operations
- C. Limited to engine failures
- D. The legal foundation allowing the PIC to do what is necessary to handle an emergency safely

5. A pilot encountering severe icing in IMC that the aircraft cannot handle may, under §91.3:

- A. Only descend if ATC approves first
- B. Take no deviating action
- C. Deviate from the assigned altitude or route as required to escape the icing, then advise ATC
- D. Continue the clearance regardless

6. Declaring an emergency to ATC:

- A. Is prohibited for Part 91 pilots
- B. Requires the pilot to land immediately
- C. Alerts ATC to provide priority handling and assistance
- D. Automatically results in a violation

7. The word used to declare a distress condition (grave and imminent danger) is:

- A. "Pan-Pan"
- B. "Mayday," repeated three times
- C. "Emergency"
- D. "Securité"

8. The phrase used to declare an urgency condition (a concern but not immediate danger) is:

- A. "Mayday"
- B. "Emergency"
- C. "Pan-Pan," repeated three times
- D. "Help"

9. The transponder code for a general emergency is:

- A. 7700
- B. 7600
- C. 7500
- D. 1200

10. The transponder code 7600 indicates:

- A. Hijacking
- B. Two-way radio communication failure
- C. A general emergency
- D. VFR operations

11. The transponder code 7500 indicates:

- A. Radio failure
- B. Unlawful interference (hijacking)
- C. A general emergency
- D. Minimum fuel

12. A pilot who declares an emergency and deviates from a clearance:

- A. Should advise ATC of the deviation as soon as practical, after maintaining aircraft control
- B. Must obtain ATC approval before any deviation
- C. Forfeits PIC authority to ATC
- D. Is automatically grounded

13. "Minimum fuel," advised to ATC, indicates:

- A. The aircraft has declared an emergency
- B. The aircraft is requesting priority landing
- C. The aircraft has exactly 45 minutes of fuel
- D. The aircraft cannot accept undue delay, though it is not yet an emergency

14. A declared fuel emergency (as opposed to "minimum fuel") means the aircraft:

- A. Has comfortable reserves
- B. Requires priority handling because fuel has become critical
- C. Is operating normally
- D. Has cancelled IFR

15. The relationship between §91.3 authority and ATC instructions is that:

- A. ATC instructions always override PIC judgment
- B. The PIC must never deviate from ATC instructions
- C. The PIC needs ATC permission to handle any emergency
- D. The PIC may deviate from ATC instructions as required by an emergency, retaining final authority

16. A pilot's reluctance to declare an emergency or "bother" ATC is:

- A. A sign of good airmanship
- B. Required by regulation
- C. A documented factor in accident chains; declaring early is encouraged
- D. Necessary to avoid paperwork

17. After declaring an emergency, a pilot who is asked by ATC for the "nature of the emergency, souls on board, and fuel remaining" should:

- A. Refuse to provide the information
- B. Provide the information to help ATC coordinate assistance
- C. Provide it only after landing
- D. Squawk 1200

18. The priority of actions when handling an in-flight emergency is:

- A. Communicate, navigate, then aviate
- B. Aviate, navigate, communicate
- C. Navigate, aviate, communicate
- D. Communicate first, always

19. A pilot who experiences an emergency but does not deviate from any rule:

- A. Must still file a written report automatically
- B. Has committed a violation by not deviating
- C. Loses PIC authority
- D. Is not required to file a report unless requested, since no rule was deviated from

20. The fundamental purpose of §91.3(b) emergency authority is to:

- A. Empower the PIC to take whatever action is necessary to ensure safety in an emergency
- B. Transfer authority to ATC during emergencies
- C. Limit the pilot's options in an emergency
- D. Require ATC approval for emergency actions

21. A PIC who deviates from an altitude assignment to avoid a midair under TCAS/traffic guidance is:

- A. Exercising §91.3 emergency authority to ensure safety
- B. Violating the clearance with no justification
- C. Required to obtain ATC approval first
- D. Prohibited from such action

22. Squawking 7700 will:

- A. Cancel the IFR flight plan
- B. Reduce the aircraft's radar visibility
- C. Trigger an alert on ATC displays, drawing immediate attention
- D. Disable the transponder

23. When an emergency has passed and normal operations resume, the pilot should:

- A. Continue squawking the emergency code for the rest of the flight
- B. Land immediately regardless of conditions
- C. Cancel the IFR flight plan
- D. Advise ATC that the emergency is over and reset the transponder as directed

24. A pilot uncertain whether a situation qualifies as an emergency should:

- A. Wait until it clearly becomes critical before acting
- B. Avoid declaring to prevent paperwork
- C. Err on the side of declaring or advising ATC early to obtain assistance
- D. Handle it silently without ATC

25. The relationship between PIC authority and accountability under §91.3 is that the PIC:

- A. Holds final authority for safety and is accountable for the decisions made
- B. Has authority but no accountability
- C. Has accountability but no authority
- D. Shares both equally with ATC at all times

## **ANSWER KEY & EXPLANATIONS – SESSION 33**

1. A. Final authority — Under §91.3(a), the PIC is directly responsible for, and the final authority as to, the operation of the aircraft.
2. C. Deviate as required — Under §91.3(b), in an emergency requiring immediate action, the PIC may deviate from any Part 91 rule to the extent required to meet that emergency.
3. D. Written report on request — Under §91.3(c), a PIC who deviates must send a written report to the Administrator upon request.
4. D. Foundation for safe action — The §91.3(b) authority is the legal foundation allowing the PIC to do what is necessary to handle an emergency safely.
5. C. Deviate then advise — A pilot facing severe icing may deviate from the assigned altitude or route as required to escape, then advise ATC.

6. C. Priority handling — Declaring an emergency alerts ATC to provide priority handling and assistance.
7. B. "Mayday" ×3 — A distress condition (grave and imminent danger) is declared with "Mayday," repeated three times.
8. C. "Pan-Pan" ×3 — An urgency condition is declared with "Pan-Pan," repeated three times.
9. A. 7700 — The transponder code for a general emergency is 7700.
10. B. Radio failure — Code 7600 indicates two-way radio communication failure.
11. B. Hijacking — Code 7500 indicates unlawful interference (hijacking).
12. A. Advise ASAP after control — A pilot deviating under emergency authority should advise ATC as soon as practical, after maintaining aircraft control.
13. D. Cannot accept undue delay — "Minimum fuel" indicates the aircraft cannot accept undue delay, though it is not yet an emergency.
14. B. Critical/priority — A declared fuel emergency means fuel has become critical and the aircraft requires priority handling.
15. D. May deviate, retains authority — The PIC may deviate from ATC instructions as required by an emergency, retaining final authority.
16. C. Accident factor — Reluctance to declare is a documented factor in accident chains; declaring early is encouraged.
17. B. Provide info — A pilot should provide the nature, souls on board, and fuel remaining to help ATC coordinate assistance.

18. B. Aviate/navigate/communicate — The emergency priority is aviate, navigate, communicate.

19. D. Report only if requested — A pilot who experiences an emergency without deviating from a rule is not required to file a report unless requested.

20. A. Whatever action necessary — The purpose of §91.3(b) is to empower the PIC to take whatever action is necessary to ensure safety in an emergency.

21. A. §91.3 authority — Deviating from an altitude to avoid a midair under traffic guidance is exercising §91.3 emergency authority.

22. C. Alerts ATC displays — Squawking 7700 triggers an alert on ATC displays, drawing immediate attention.

23. D. Advise over/reset — When the emergency passes, advise ATC it is over and reset the transponder as directed.

24. C. Declare early — A pilot uncertain whether a situation is an emergency should err on the side of declaring or advising ATC early to obtain assistance.

25. A. Authority + accountability — Under §91.3, the PIC holds final authority for safety and is accountable for the decisions made.