



# RWR Pilot Training



## Malibu - Mirage - Meridian

*Insurance Approved, Type Specific Training Programs  
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### I'm Glad You Asked

### *VFR Takeoff – Pick UP IFR in the Air*

By Dick Rochfort, ATP, MCFI, CFII, MEI

**QUESTION:** Is it poor airmanship not to receive an IFR clearance on the ground if you have filed an IFR flight plan prior to takeoff from an uncontrolled airport given the following restrictions?

- 1) You can remain VFR until you can contact ATC for your clearance.
- 2) You are not penetrating controlled airspace.
- 3) You can maintain visual traffic separation.

I always thought this was OK having heard it done all the time. In Canada our service provider Nav Canada I am told frowns on the procedure. Just wondering how it is viewed in the US by the FAA.

Any thoughts would be appreciated.

**ANSWER:** I'm glad you asked ...

I think the short answer to your question is "No". It is not poor airmanship to take off and pick up your IFR when airborne. It is certainly expedient, but you are, as I am sure you know, responsible for obstacle and terrain clearance, traffic and airspace separation until you hear the magic words. You must also do all of this while maintaining VFR.

The difference, I think between CAA and FAA in this regard is only that CAA is more sensitive to the frailty of this procedure. The consequences of not being able to maintain VFR are quite high. It is also true that a clear cold night presents its own issues with respect to terrain and obstacles. These issues have produced some legendary accidents such as the Brown Field/Reba McIntyre band accident. This scenario is complicated by the fact that ODPs (obstacle departure procedures) are routinely ignored by VFR pilots on a regular basis.

Taking off VFR with the intention of picking up IFR while ignoring ODPs is the aviation equivalent of running red lights and it IS poor airmanship.

I hope this information is helpful.

Fly Safely – Train Often

Dick Rochfort, ATP, MCFI, CFII, MEI

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*“I’m Glad You Asked” is a regular column written by Master Flight Instructor Dick Rochfort. Dick answers questions which come up frequently while conducting training in the Malibu, Mirage and Meridian aircraft. If you have a question for Dick, you can send it to him at [mail@rwrpilottraining.com](mailto:mail@rwrpilottraining.com). He’ll be ... “glad you asked”.*

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## Biography

### Richard W Rochfort



A former corporate pilot and primary flight instructor, Dick is a full-time Master Certified Flight Instructor providing insurance approved initial and recurrent pilot training in the Piper PA46 Malibu, Mirage, and Meridian aircraft. He is currently flying over 450 hours per year and trains 60-80 pilots every year exclusively in these aircraft.

He holds multi-engine ATP and Gold Seal Flight Instructor Certificates with CFII, MEI and CE-525S ratings. He has been actively involved in flight training since 1991 and has trained pilots all over the US, Canada and Europe.

Dick is an Aviation Safety Counselor for the FAA Baltimore FSDO, a National Industry Member of the FAA Safety Team (FAAST) and has conducted hundreds of programs for the pilot community. He is an instructor for the M/MOPA Safety and Training Foundation and The National Association of Flight Instructors has designated him Master CFI. Less than 1% of all flight instructors have earned this designation.

Dick served as a Staff Sergeant E6 in the US Army Special Forces from 1970 until 1976 as an A team radio operator, training indigenous personnel in field communications. He worked from 1976 until 1991 as an industrial engineer training manufacturing personnel for the production of communication and navigation equipment for US military.

His education includes undergraduate degrees in Clinical Psychology and Engineering and a Masters Degree in Business Administration. Dick lives in Baltimore, Maryland with his wife and two daughters. He is a PADI Certified Scuba Diving Instructor, First Aid Instructor and an Eagle Scout.

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