



DFS Deutsche Flugsicherung

Pilot Info 02/2014

ATC clearances

1. Climb and descent clearances

To ensure separation minima or conditions of transfer of control for entering a downstream sector, climb or descent clearances are often combined with restrictions.

These restrictions are safety-relevant and must always be complied with. If compliance with restrictions is not possible – for example, in the case of assigned climb rates – ATC must be informed without delay.

In some cases, it may not be clear how long such restrictions apply. The aim of this Pilot Info is to clarify such questions. Here some examples:

| | |
|---------|--|
| ATC | Coconut 372 descend FL250 rate of descent 2500 ft/min or greater |
| COC372* | Coconut 372 descend FL250 rate of descent 2500 ft/min or greater |
| ATC | Coconut 372 contact radar on 133 decimal 755 |
| COC372* | Coconut 372 contact radar on 133 decimal 755 |

Do pilots have to comply with the descent rate after having changed radio frequency?

Yes

The call sign COC372 and the radio call sign Coconut are fictional designations

Note:

Pilots are not obliged to inform the next sector about the descent rate; this is coordinated by ATC internally.

Next sector:

| | |
|---------|---|
| COC372* | Radar good afternoon Coconut 372 passing FL295 descending FL250 |
| ATC | Coconut 372 continue descent FL200 |
| COC372* | Coconut 372 continue descent FL200 |

Do pilots have to comply with the previous descent rate after receiving an amended clearance?

No

The previous descent rate no longer applies after the new instruction has been issued, even if it is the same controller who issues the new instruction. If a restriction is meant to continue to apply, it must be contained in the new instruction, for example:

| | |
|-----|--|
| ATC | Coconut 372 continue descent FL200 with given rate |
|-----|--|

2. Speed clearances

The above rule does not apply to the assignment of speeds. A speed restriction must be complied with even if a new instruction or clearance is issued. It will only be cancelled by a clearance with a different content.

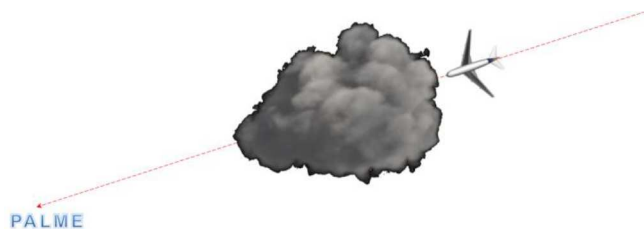
The speed assigned by ATC must **always** be included in position reports and **in the initial call after a frequency change**.

Exemptions from this rule are published in the AIP and mainly concern the frequency changes from Arrival to Director and from Director to Tower.

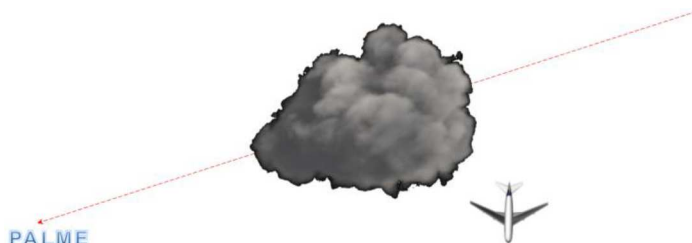
In this regard, notice should also be taken of the provisions published in AIP ENR 1.8-10 (2.1): "If, during the flight, the pilot-in-command intends to change the cruising speed indicated in the flight plan by 5% or more, an ATC clearance shall be obtained."

3. Alternative clearances

| | |
|---------|---|
| COC372* | Coconut 372 request left turn to the south to avoid CBs |
|---------|---|



| | |
|-----|---|
| ATC | Roger Coconut 372 left turn to the south approved |
|-----|---|

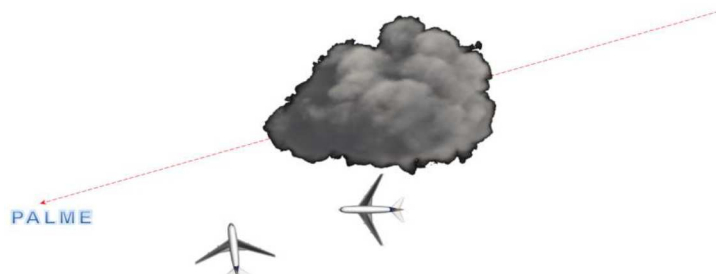


Confusion may also arise in cases where an alternative clearance has been issued and the pilot wishes to resume his original heading

| | |
|---------|---|
| COC372* | Coconut 372 we are clear of weather turning back to PALME |
|---------|---|

Is such action allowed ?

No



It is very important to report "clear of weather" to ATC. In the case of thunderstorm activities in the sector, there will be a number of other pilots having requested an alternative heading.

A clearance has to be obtained from ATC before resuming the original heading.

Summary

- Clearances and assigned climb/descent rates continue to apply after frequency changes.
- Assigned climb/descent rates apply until a new clearance or instruction is issued.
- If assigned climb/descent rates are meant to apply after a new clearance or instruction is issued, they must be explicitly mentioned in the new clearance or instruction.
- Horizontal speeds assigned by ATC must be complied with even if a new instruction or clearance is issued and must be included in each position report and in the initial call after a frequency change (see AIP for exemptions).
- Changes in cruising speed by 5% or more require an ATC clearance.
- In the case of alternative headings, do not resume your original heading without having obtained a clearance to do so.
- Whenever you are unsure or have any doubts, **do not hesitate to ask.**