

Mid Air Collision Avoidance
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On Monday, April 13, we attended the MACA (Mid Air Collision Avoidance) Seminar at Logan (another was scheduled at Ogden later in the week but I don't know if anyone from the Club went). Controllers from Ogden Tower, Hill Tower, the Salt Lake TRACON (*ie*, "Salt Lake Approach") and Clover Control (which controls the restricted areas and MOAs to the west of the Great Salt Lake as well as the seasonal brine shrimp harvest) were there, and talked about their procedures and concerns.

The presentation was primarily aimed at power pilots, but a lot was applicable to gliders (and many of us are power pilots as well).

The short version of their message is that the primary purpose of Air Traffic Control is to prevent midair collisions. They presented statistics about mid-air collisions. A typical scenario is a clear weekend day, below 8,000' MSL, with no flight plan; that sounds like me scratching on the ridge at Logan! (Remember, the best way to tell a non-pilot from a pilot is to ask them the purpose of a flight plan: it facilitates search-and-rescue.) Often, a faster aircraft runs up the tail of a slower aircraft. They did not discuss glider mid-air collisions at all, but this is a good time to remind everyone to review the Right-of-Way FARs.

Here are some key points that might affect us.

- They like transponders. Use one if you have it; gliders squawk 1202. They will steer other aircraft around you if they "see" you. **Please remember that the PowerFlarm units are *NOT* transponders.** ATC cannot see you based on PowerFlarm.
- The website <http://www.seeandavoid.org/> shows most of the Special Use Airspace in the USA and indicates whether it is cold or active. This seems great as a preflight aid but doesn't seem to do much good once you are in the air. Once in the air you can call ATC (the frequencies are on the sectionals) or flight service for updates. **The same applies to Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs)**, which can pop up with no notice, especially during fire season. I have spent a lot of time flying in fire TFRs and, trust me, you do not want to be there: there's an aircraft at every altitude, and everyone on board is focused on the fire. If your hands are too full to call FSS and get an update at least stay away from any fires.
- Departing westbound out of Morgan puts you almost immediately into Hill's Class D airspace, or, if you are above 7,800' MSL, Salt Lake's Class B. They can't see up the canyon to anticipate your arrival, so call as soon as you have line-of-sight. The Hill controller doesn't seem to have any problem with civilian traffic in his airspace, but of course he has to know about you.

There is a "shout line," *ie*, a squawk box, between Hill and Ogden towers so they let each other know about aircraft passing between their Class D airspaces.

- When Hill gets busy, which is fairly often, they have F-16s "loiter" to the East. They can fly wherever they like, and I think Bruce Schwab will agree that F-16 pilots are pilots

and want to do the same sightseeing–joyriding that the rest of us do, so you might find them in the I-80 Canyon, Cottonwood Canyon, etc. *at glider altitudes*. This is especially dangerous on tow out of Morgan and transitioning to the ridge. They are well-trained to spot other aircraft but who knows what happens when you're trying to find your buddy's house at 300 knots indicated and the only radar returns from the bogey are from dental work...

Ron says that he has seen them frequently.

Also, when flying the ridge around Mt. Ogden and transitioning to the ridge south of I84 be aware of the location of the Class D airspace.

- When flying out of Cedar Valley and Nephi be aware of the Military Operating Areas (MOAs) and the protocol to use if you want to fly within them. Clover Control says that everyone is welcome in the restricted areas, as long as you ask! No clearance is required to enter a MOA under VFR, but they have great radar and will help you out, as long as you ask!

Some areas are too dangerous to fly over (*eg*, blowing up old ICBM motors), so they'll steer you away, but they seem quite comfortable separating the military traffic from you by altitude as well as by distance.

I gave up asking Salt Lake Center for a clearance through there decades ago, but next time I am headed that way I will try asking Clover. (Although they weren't at the meeting, I would hope that Cowboy Control, which handles Mountain Home's practice area, is also as helpful.)

- A couple of our members have had unpleasant encounters with Salt Lake Approach. I did not bring this up on Monday but my controller friends say that this behavior should not be typical, because basically they want to know that we are there. A midair with a 737 would be a horrible tragedy, and contact with the TRACON can help prevent it. My personal feeling is that if you are near their airspace, especially the approach corridors, then you should tell them, but be sensitive about it, too, to the extent that you can. "Being sensitive" means that if they ask you to fly a heading you should do it *unless* you think it endangers you, in which case you should politely decline. They may also assign an altitude (for a glider I would hope that would be an "at or below" altitude but you never know), but if they do they may not assign you a heading.

- **The short version of their message is that the primary purpose of Air Traffic Control is to prevent midair collisions.** It's good CRM to use them whenever possible.