

# Aerodrome Flight Information Service (AFIS)

## Introduction to AFIS

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**Aerodrome Flight Information Service (AFIS)** is the provision of flight information service to aircraft in the vicinity of an aerodrome. This includes traffic information, weather information, aerodrome conditions, hazards & obstructions, and any other information which may be relevant to the safe navigation of a flight.

Generally, an AFIS unit will have either the callsign "Information" (in Iceland) or "AFIS" (in Greenland and EKVVG.)

There are two major regulatory environments in which AFIS is provided beneath the Reykjavik CTA: **Iceland**, and **Greenland & EKVVG**. (Aviation in both Greenland and the Faroe Islands is managed by Denmark's ANSP, Naviair, so they share similar regulations and procedures.)

These two regulatory environments have different regulations and procedures in some areas. Where relevant, the procedures below will distinguish between Icelandic and Greenlandic/Faroese operating procedures.

## Area of Responsibility

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Most AFIS aerodromes have an associated **FIZ** (Flight Information Zone – the term used in Greenland/EKVVG) or **ATZ** (Aerodrome Traffic Zone – the term used in Iceland.) Aircraft must be in two-way radio communication with the AFIS unit within the FIZ or

ATZ.

Some Icelandic AFIS aerodromes do not have an ATZ. In such cases, aircraft must be in two-way radio communication with the AFIS unit when in the “vicinity of the aerodrome.” This is defined as being within, entering, or leaving the traffic circuit.

## Differences from Controlled Aerodromes (Summary)

**AFIS officers are not controllers.** In general, AFIS units may **not** issue any clearance or instructions on their own. They may only provide information to pilots, and relay clearances from overlying ATC.

The table below briefly summarizes the key differences between controlled aerodromes and AFIS. For those unfamiliar with AFIS, keep reading — these differences will be discussed in more detail.

| Controlled Aerodromes                          | AFIS  |
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| “Cleared to...”                                | “Reykjavik Control clears you to...”<br><br><i>(Clearance <u>not</u> issued by AFIS but by overlying ACC)</i>   |
| "Information [letter] is current/correct..."   | <i>AFIS fields do not generally have an ATIS. Pilots should be offered the latest weather upon readback of their clearance, or first contact for VFR departures.</i>                                      |
| “Runway in use...”                             | <b>ICELAND:</b> The same; AFIS sets active runways.<br><br><b>GREENLAND &amp; EKVG:</b> “Preferred runway is...”  |
| “Startup approved” / “Push and start approved” | <b>ICELAND:</b> The same; AFIS gives pushback and startup clearances.<br><br><b>GREENLAND &amp; EKVG:</b> “Startup (or push and start) at your discretion, traffic is...” (or “no traffic on the ground”) |

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|--|---|
| "Taxi to... via..."  | <p>"Taxiway [X] is available"</p> <p>OR</p> <p>"Taxiway [X] is occupied, traffic is..."</p> <p><b>ICELAND:</b> AFIS may issue taxi instructions within aprons. AFIS may also refuse aircraft permission to enter runways (e.g., "remain clear of runway XX.")</p> |
| "Cleared for takeoff"  | "No reported traffic runway [XX]"   |
| "Cleared to land"  |   |
| "Line up and wait"   | "Runway [XX] is occupied, traffic is..."  |
| "Hold short runway [XX]" / "Hold position"                               |   |
| "After departure leave the control zone..." (VFR departure instructions) | No equivalent; AFIS does not issue VFR clearances.  |

## IFR Clearances

IFR aircraft request clearance via the local AFIS unit, following the steps below.

- The IFR aircraft requests clearance to the local AFIS unit, who shall then relay the clearance request to Reykjavik ACC.**
  - This can be done via any means of verbal coordination (e.g., Discord VC, VATSIM PMs, etc.)
  - The lowest sector of Reykjavik Control overlying the aerodrome shall issue the clearance, except for Greenland where Iceland Radio (if online) shall issue the clearance.
- Reykjavik ACC shall issue the clearance to the AFIS unit.**
  - Clearances may be issued via a **SID** if available, in which case the aircraft must enter controlled airspace following the SID.
  - Alternatively, the clearance may issued without departure instructions, in which case the aircraft may maneuver at its discretion on departure, and may simply enter controlled airspace tracking towards the first waypoint

of its flight plan.

- If no departure instructions are specified, the clearance shall be issued as "*cleared to [DEST] via flight planned route...*" (any reroutes may be specified before the phrase "flight planned route")

### 3. **The AFIS unit relays the clearance to the pilot, and verifies the pilot's readback.**

- When relaying the clearance, AFIS units shall relay the clearance exactly as provided by Reykjavik ACC, except that they should use the phrase "Reykjavik Control clears you to..." instead of "Cleared to..."
  - This indicates that the clearance was issued under the authority of Reykjavik ACC, not the AFIS unit.
  - This applies even if Iceland Radio issued the clearance, because Iceland Radio is part of Reykjavik ACC.

If there is no overlying ATC, or if the aircraft will not enter controlled airspace during its flight, then the aircraft should be told to depart at its discretion.

There is no AFIS equivalent to VFR departure, arrival, or circuit clearances. VFR aircraft simply depart and arrive at their discretion.

## Weather Information

AFIS aerodromes do not typically have an ATIS broadcast. Therefore, AFIS should offer all **departures upon correct readback** of their clearance, and **arrivals on first contact**, the **latest weather information**. This at least should contain the winds and QNH, as well as any other relevant meteorological information (SIGMET, turbulence, etc.) The full met report should also be provided upon request.

*(Note: Pilots may have also have obtained the METAR from their own sources. If a pilot does not require the weather, the AFIS unit does not need to provide the full met report, but **shall still provide the latest QNH.**)*

**At EKVG:** AFIS uses a **Turbulence Weather Indicator (TWI)** to predict expected turbulence on departure/arrival based on local winds. For VATSIM purposes, the TWI has been simulated as a webpage using data pulled from the

Faroese AIP, here: <https://vats.im/twi>

Suggested phraseology is "[Light/moderate/severe] turbulence indicated for [departure/arrival] runway [XX]."

Thanks to controller Ollie Killeen for creating the simulated TWI webpage!

## Runway in Use

### Iceland

Icelandic AFIS units determine an active runway the same way as TWR controllers. All aircraft are obligated to use this runway.

AFIS units shall notify the overlying Reykjavik ACC controller of the active runway at their airport, to ensure departures and arrivals are cleared to enter/leave controlled airspace via the correct SIDs/STARs for that runway.

### Greenland & EKVG

Greenlandic & EKVG AFIS shall **not** determine an active runway, but may determine a **preferred** runway using the same criteria as an active runway. The preferred runway is considered advisory information only – aircraft are not required to use this runway.

However, Reykjavik ACC may sometimes clear an aircraft to fly a published instrument procedure (SID, STAR, approach, etc.) for a specific runway. In such cases, aircraft shall use the runway associated with that procedure. If the aircraft wants to use a different runway, the AFIS unit must coordinate an amended clearance for that aircraft with Reykjavik ACC.

**At EKVG:** If turbulence is indicated as **severe** for any runway by the TWI, then EKVG AFIS shall **close that runway** for departures and/or arrivals (whichever has severe turbulence indicated.) EKVG AFIS shall also notify the overlying Reykjavik ACC controller accordingly.

Suggested phraseology is: "Runway [XX] closed for [departure/arrival], severe turbulence indicated."

# Ground Movements

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All movements on taxiways and runways must be performed at the pilot's discretion. The AFIS unit should provide traffic information to all aircraft moving on the ground regarding which taxiways are available or occupied, and any relevant traffic on the ground.

## Iceland

Icelandic AFIS units control all traffic on the movement area **outside** of runways and taxiways, and have the authority to refuse the entry of aircraft onto runways.

This effectively means that Icelandic AFIS units are apron controllers at their aerodrome. Aircraft shall call the AFIS unit for startup clearance, as well as for any pushback or taxiing required on the apron.

## Greenland & EKV

All movements on *any* part of the movement area, **including aprons**, shall be performed at the pilot's discretion. Aircraft shall report starting up, as well as any ground movements (e.g. taxi.)

# Takeoff & Landing

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AFIS units shall **not** issue takeoff or landing clearances. If the runway is clear of traffic, then the AFIS unit should inform departing or arriving aircraft that there is **“no reported traffic runway XX.”** Aircraft, when told this, may line up, depart, or land on the runway at their own discretion. For example:

“FLI402, winds 130 degrees 4 knots, no reported traffic runway 12.”

If there **is** traffic blocking the runway in any way, then the AFIS unit should inform departing aircraft **“runway XX occupied,”** provide traffic information, and if necessary, ask for the aircraft's intentions. For example:

☐ FLI402, runway 12 occupied, traffic is a company A320 backtracking to vacate the runway, report intentions.

**NOTE:** Even if the runway is occupied, aircraft may still use that runway at their discretion. They are only obligated by the rules of the air not to hinder other traffic.

E.g., if one aircraft is vacating at one end of the runway, another aircraft may reasonably choose to line up on the *opposite* end of the runway, if doing so would not obstruct the path of the vacating aircraft.

## Airborne Traffic

As much as possible, AFIS units should proactively offer traffic, weather, and aerodrome information to aircraft in their area of responsibility, in order to facilitate their safe navigation.

Traffic information should generally be provided using procedural methods, since AFIS units do not have radar in Iceland, Greenland, or EKVG. To provide such information, AFIS units may ask aircraft to provide position reports, such as:

- Waypoints/fixes on their route, or on published SIDs, STARs, and approach procedures which the aircraft intends to fly
- Positions relative to the airport, or waypoints/fixes (e.g., abeam the airport, 5 NM from XX NDB, passing waypoint ABCDE, etc.)
- Phases of approach (e.g., final, established on the ILS, etc.)
- Legs of the traffic circuit (e.g., downwind, final, etc.)

Aircraft do not require the AFIS unit's permission to leave the frequency once they are outside of the ATZ/FIZ/vicinity of the aerodrome. However, if the aircraft will be entering controlled airspace, AFIS should instruct them to contact the relevant ATC unit.

- E.g., at EKVG, aircraft should be instructed to contact Reykjavik Control approaching 7500ft.

Aircraft arriving an aerodrome (entering the ATZ/FIZ or traffic circuit) should be provided with the active/preferred runway, as well as any relevant traffic information.

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