Stanfield
VOR Procedures

Revision Date: September 8, 2026

The airspace around the Stanfield VOR (TFD) and Casa Grande Airport (KCGZ) is extremely congested with training aircraft.

The following procedures are provided as recommendations and best practices to improve communication and provide a safe training environment at and around the Stanfield VOR. Following these procedures is highly recommended, but not mandatory. Please contact the AFTW with any questions or concerns regarding these recommended procedures.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Everyone following these procedures needs to remember to be patient with, and understanding of, other pilots who are not familiar with these procedures. Those of us who fly these procedures regularly may start to think that this is "the only way" or "the right way" for everything to be done, thereby leading us to think that someone else is "doing it wrong." Please remember that these are unofficial procedures that are not known to many other pilots. When it becomes apparent that there is someone attempting to transit the area and/or practice an instrument approach without following the recommended procedures, the instructor/evaluator currently at the "top-of-stack" should ask the unfamiliar pilot if they would like help joining the flow of traffic and then proceed to guide that pilot through the procedures as needed. Please be careful not to sound frustrated or inconvenienced while doing this.

It is appropriate to kindly make a brief radio call to suggest that unfamiliar pilots obtain these procedures at aftw.org before their next flight. Please remember to be patient, courteous, and professional at all times.

Thank you!

Summary of Significant Changes in this Revision

1. Added procedures for giving way to IFR traffic.
2. Added procedures for when top-of-stack is higher than 7,500 ft. MSL.
3. Holding-only is not available when top-of-stack is 7,000 feet or higher.

Stanfield VOR Procedures

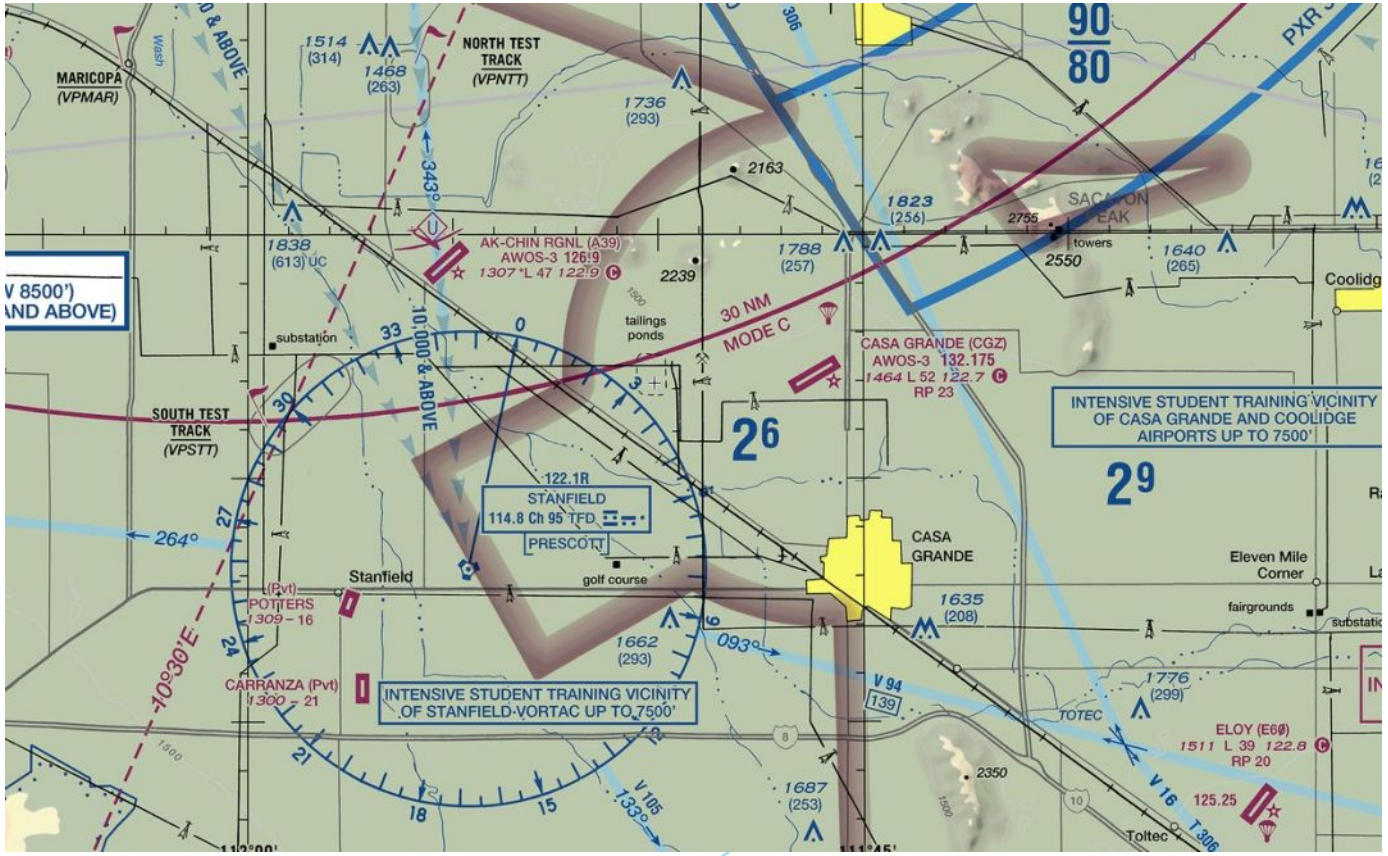
Dimensions

Stanfield VOR Procedures

- Depiction on Low Altitude IFR Chart

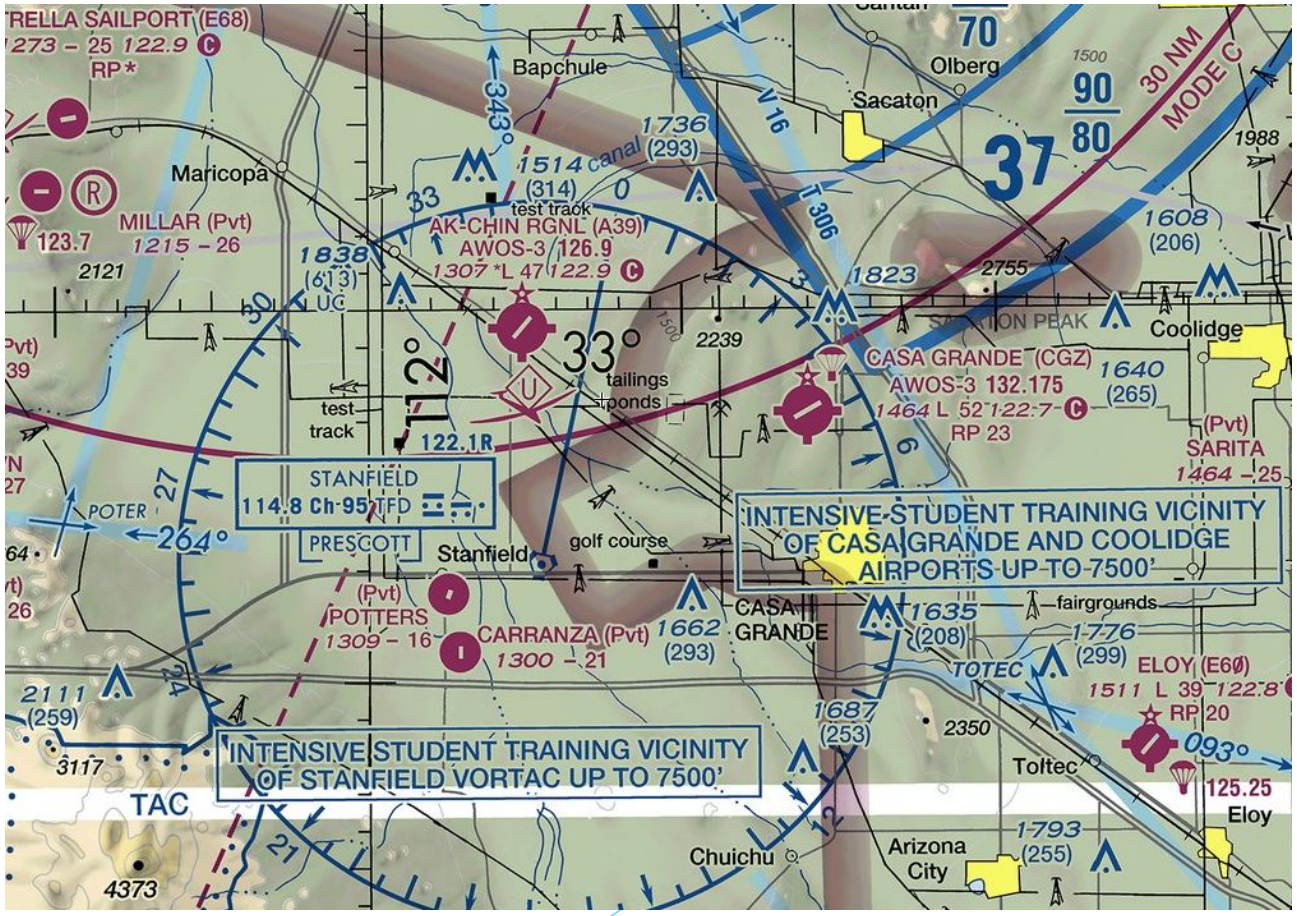
Stanfield VOR Procedures

- Depiction on VFR Terminal Area Chart



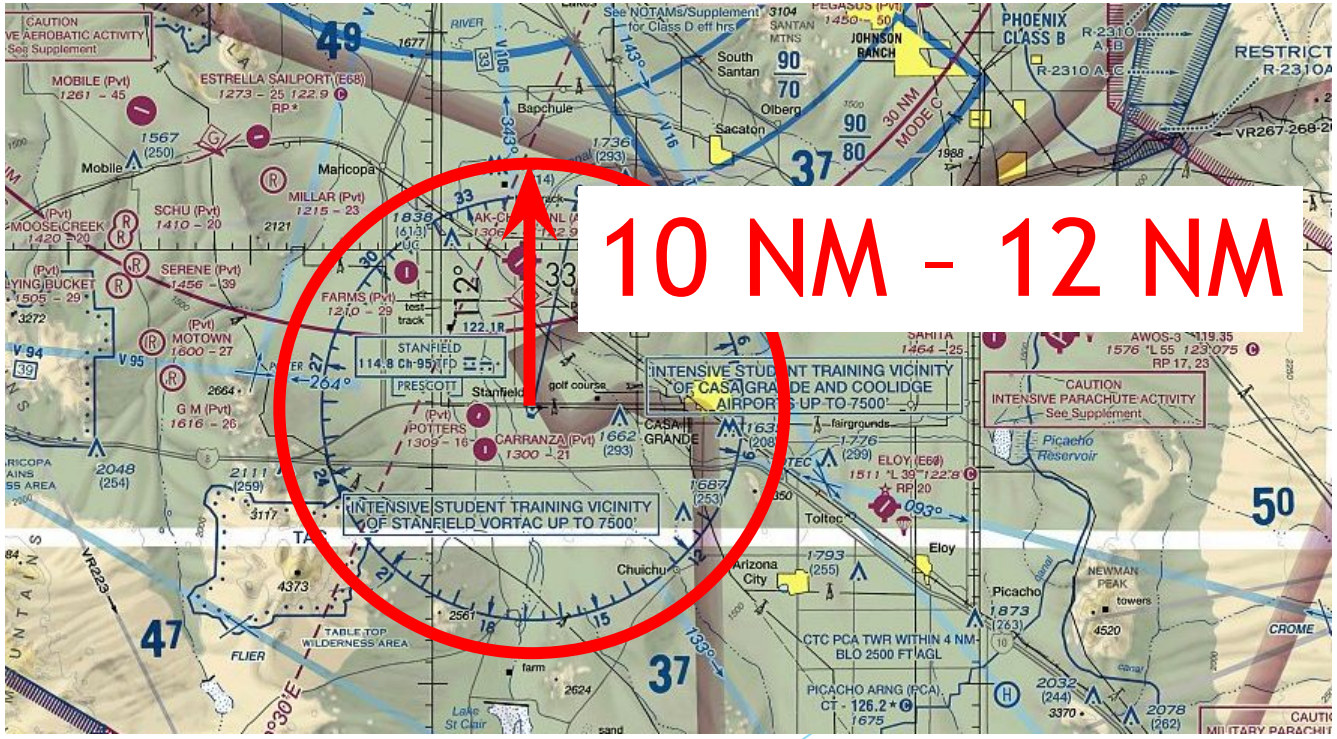
Stanfield VOR Procedures

- Depiction on VFR Sectional Chart

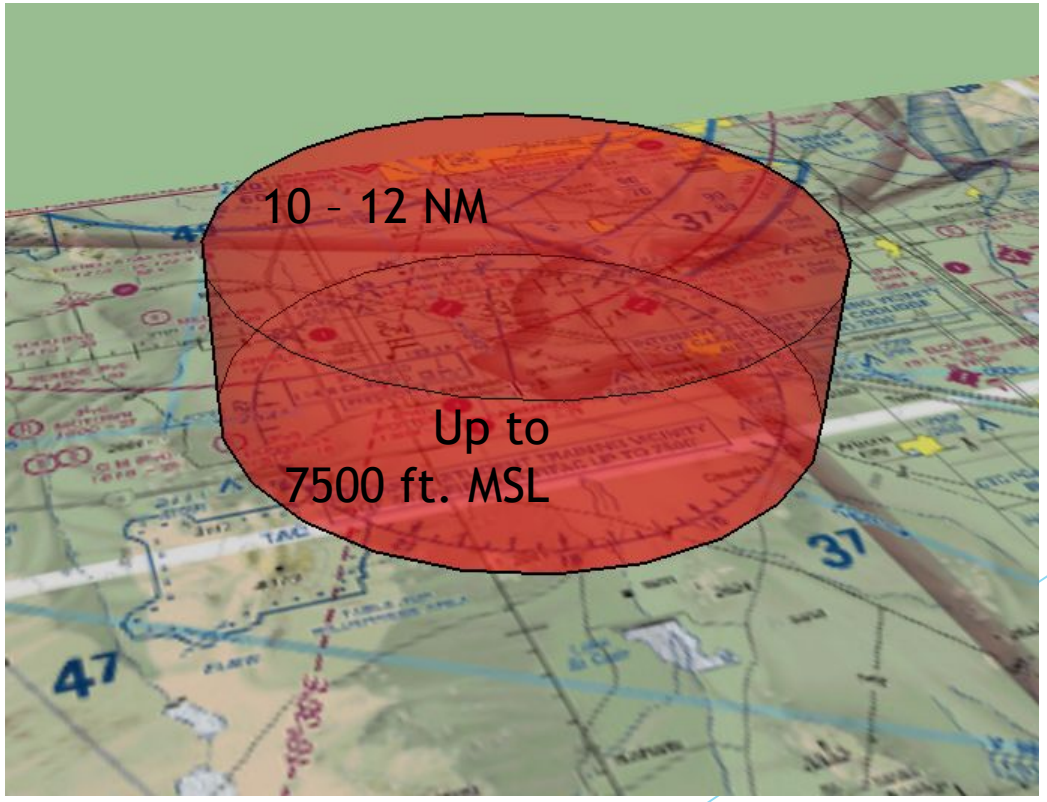


Stanfield VOR Procedures

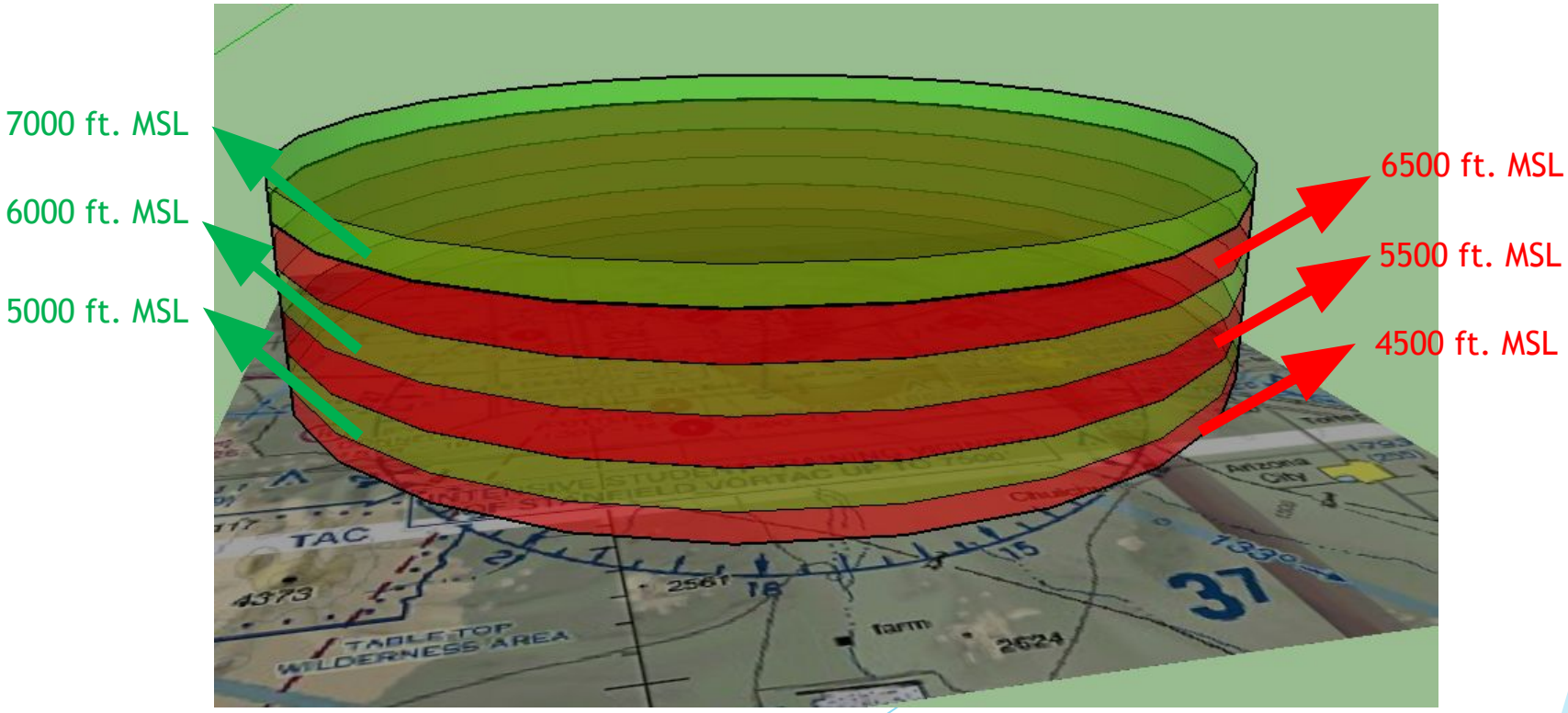
- Stanfield VOR training area laterally extends up to 10 NM - 12 NM from the TFD VOR



- Stanfield VOR training area extends vertically up to 7500 ft. MSL



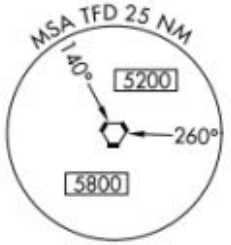
- Stack altitudes are separated by 500 ft.



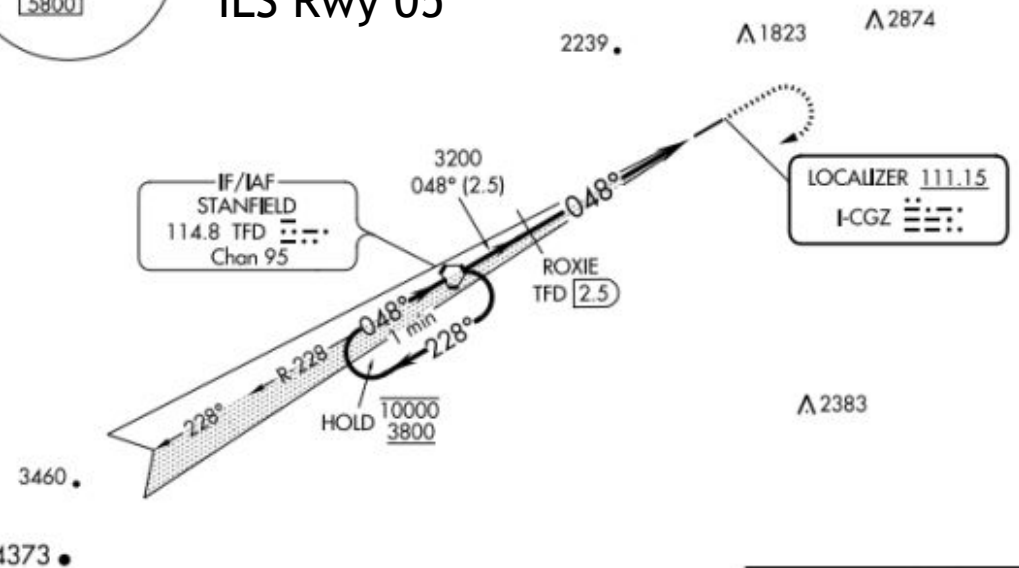
Stanfield VOR Procedures

Simulated IFR Procedures

- Several IFR Procedures using The Stack
  - KCGZ ILS or LOC RWY 05
    - Starts at 3800 ft. MSL
  - KCGZ VOR/DME RWY 05
    - Starts at 3500 ft. MSL
  - KCGZ RNAV (GPS) RWY 05
    - Starts at 3800 ft. MSL



ILS Rwy 05

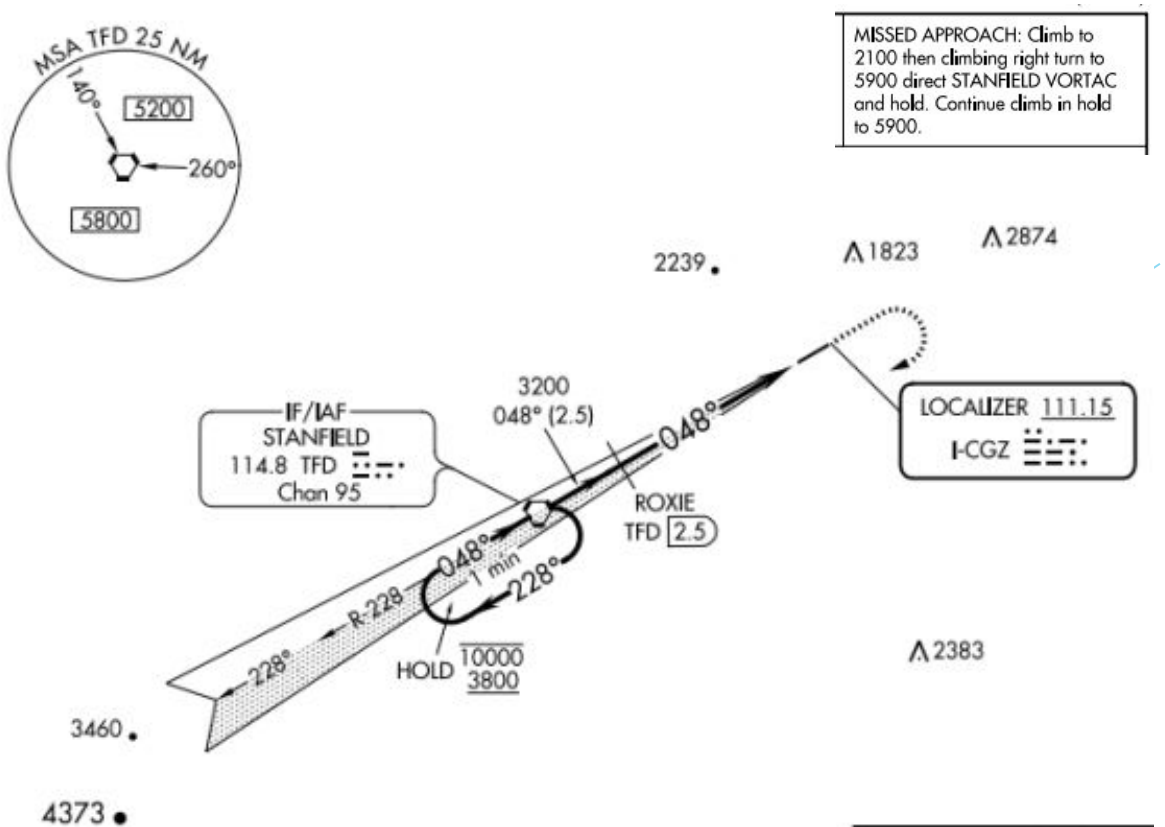


- Usable Altitudes
  - 4,500 is the lowest usable altitude to hold and await your turn to shoot the approach.
  - Any altitude below 4,500 is referred to as “Approach Altitudes” and is reserved for shooting the approaches at the appropriate starting altitude for the approach you wish to practice.
  - Above 4,500, each aircraft stacks at 500-ft increments awaiting turn to drop down and shoot the approach.

- The Stack
  - The idea is to occupy next available altitude above the top-of-stack and drop down in The Stack, one airplane at a time as altitudes become available.
  - Drop 500 ft per descent to next stack holding altitude until at 4,500 MSL.
  - Make sure nobody is below you and visually clear the altitude below. When in doubt, CALL!
  - Once you reach starting altitude, initiate approach when ready.

Top-of-stack = highest altitude in The Stack

- Missed Approach Procedures
  - The missed approach procedures for IFR approaches lead an aircraft back to The Stack.
  - When on the missed approach, as soon as practical, communicate with aircraft in The Stack.



- If performing holdings / tracking / interceptions **only**
  - Leave the lower altitudes in The Stack for airplanes flying IFR approaches.
  - The AFTW suggests holding at 7000 ft. MSL, or as appropriate for the traffic.
  - If holding aircraft intend to accomplish a practice approach, they can work their way into The Stack as they near the end of their holding practice.

Stanfield VOR Procedures

Radio Calls

- Calls should be as short and precise as possible.

- Should be made by instructor/evaluator, not the pilot in training
  - Students already have enough to think about!
  - The instructor/evaluator should simulate realistic IFR ATC calls to the pilot in training (over the intercom)

Tip: Check out LiveATC.net for KCGZ CTAF audio recordings and live feed.

- When approaching The Stack (12 NM out), start monitoring 122.70, even if you are not intending to use it (e.g., VFR nav.)
- If you are within 10 NM of The Stack, make position reports on 122.70

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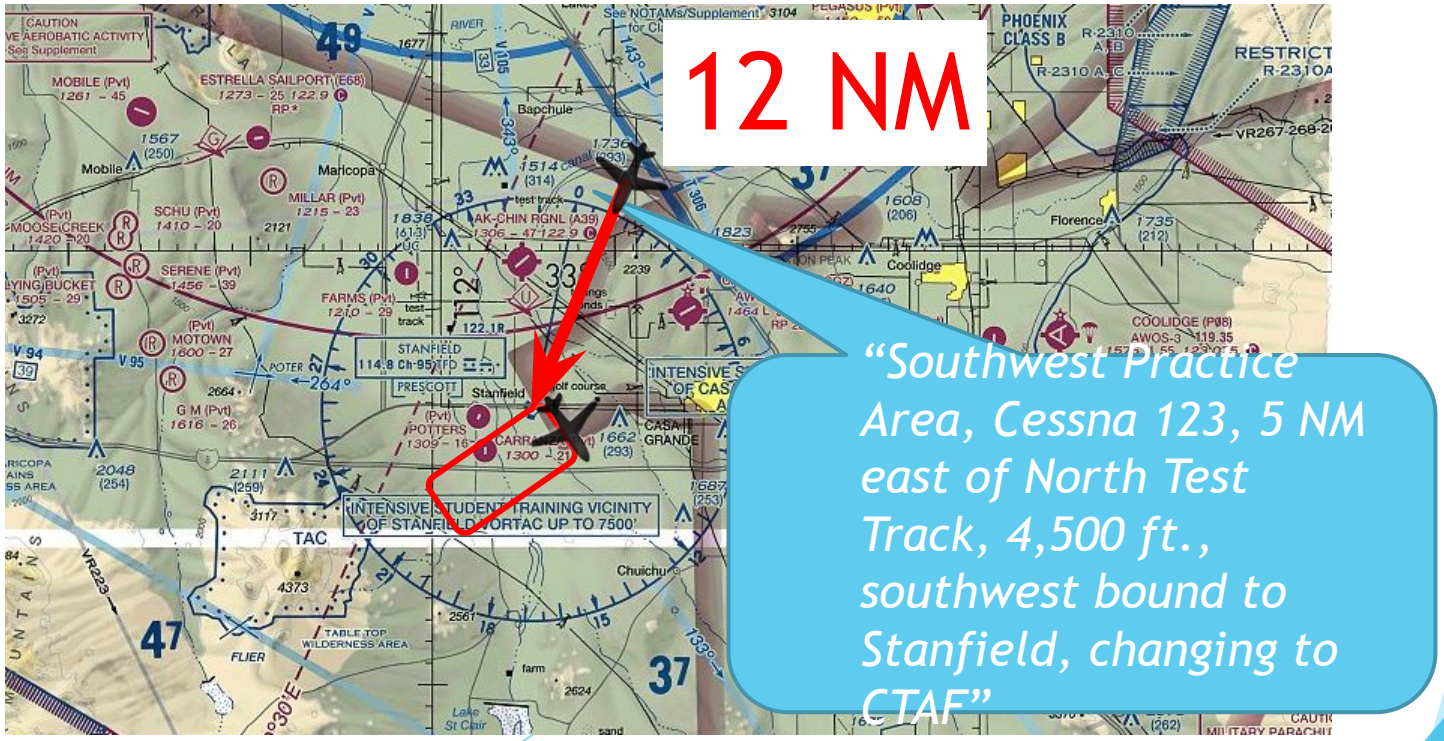
"Stanfield traffic, Cherokee 789, 6 NM northwest of Stanfield, 5,500 ft., eastbound"

- If you intend to use The Stack:
  - Make a call on the practice area frequency (122.85).
  - Make an initial call on 122.70 10 NM from Stanfield VOR.



- First call to be made 10 NM out.
  - Ask for top-of-stack.
  - Listen carefully to the current top-of-stack and occupy the next available altitude.
  - Announce intentions.

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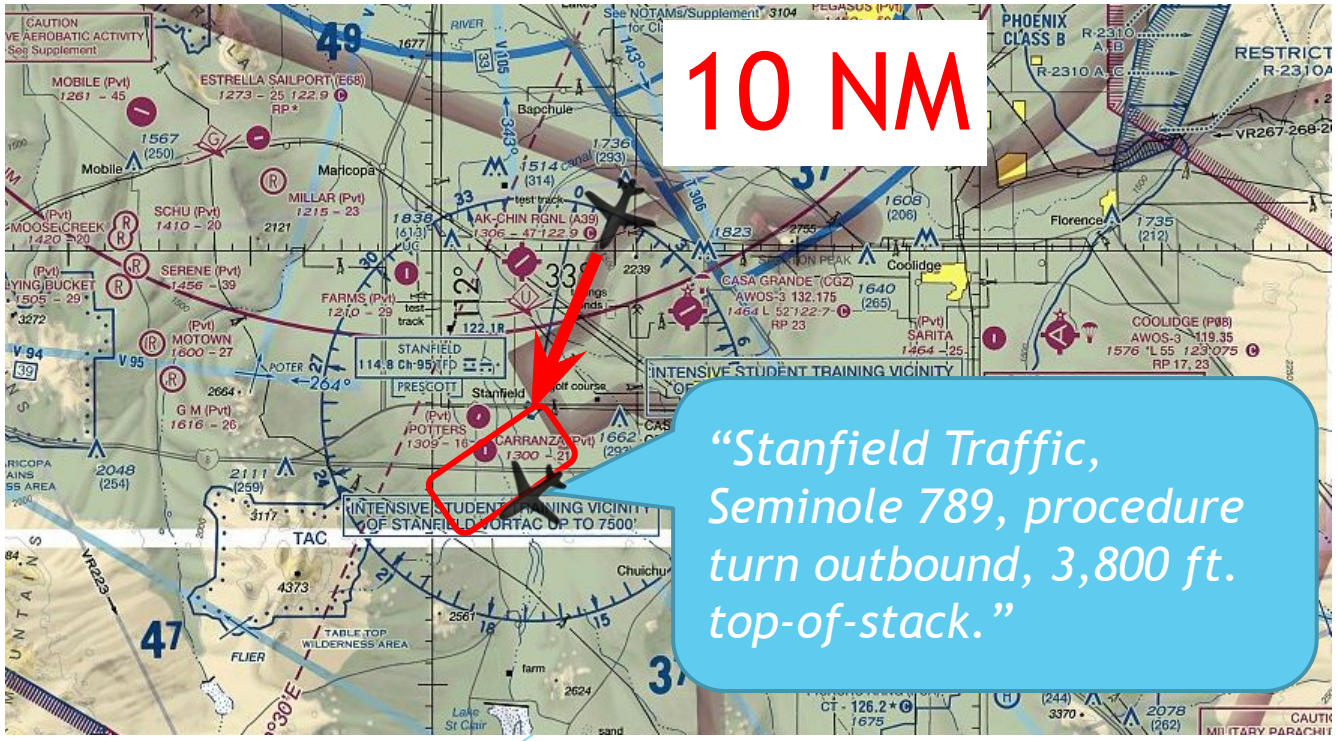
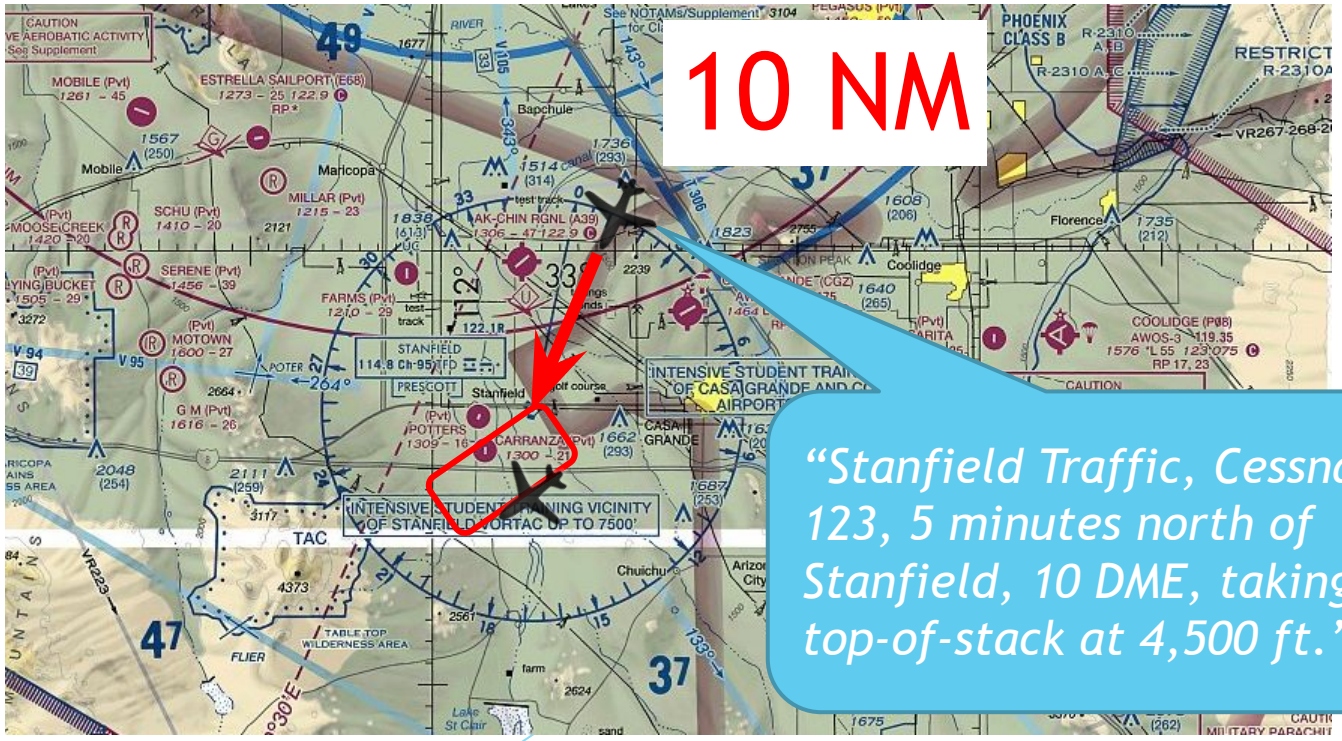


Stanfield VOR Procedures

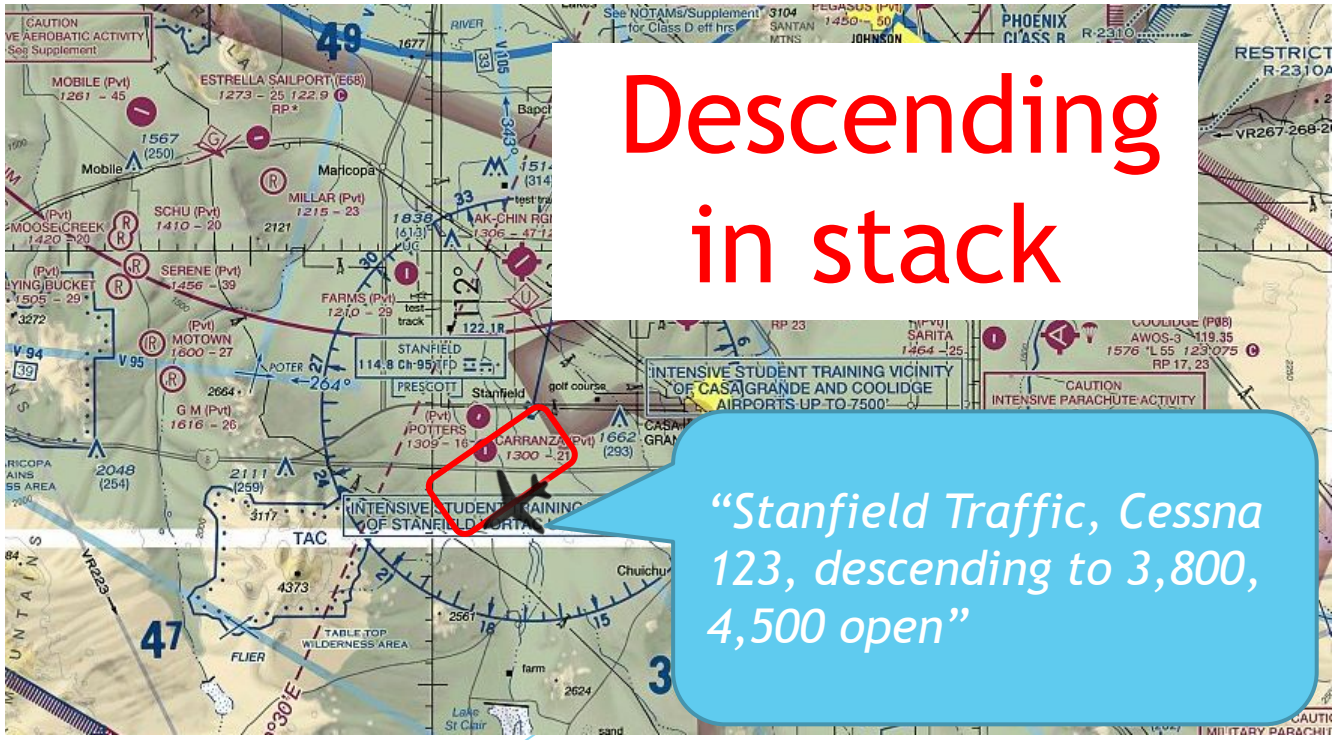
- Take top-of-stack.



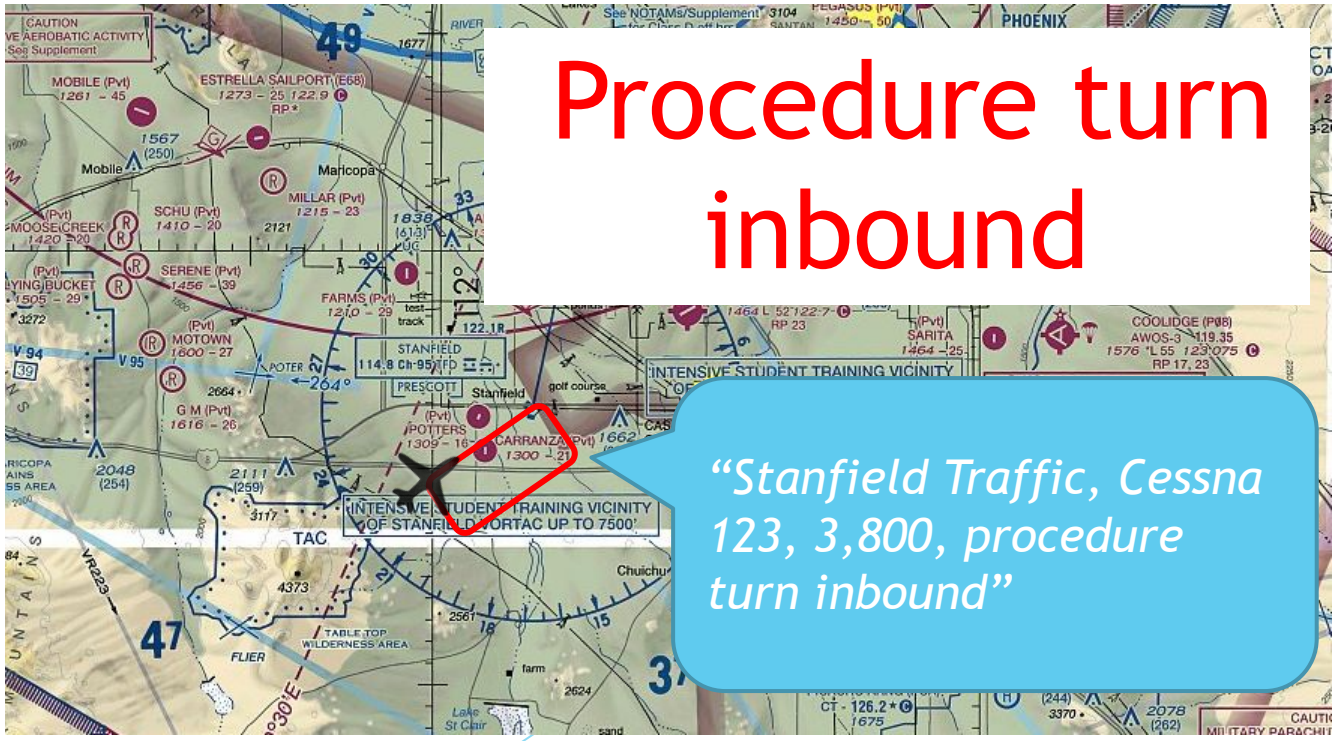
Stanfield VOR Procedures

- Next call to be made at 2 minutes out.
  - Announce intentions to take the next open altitude of 4,500 (4,000 is NOT an option because it conflicts with approaches).

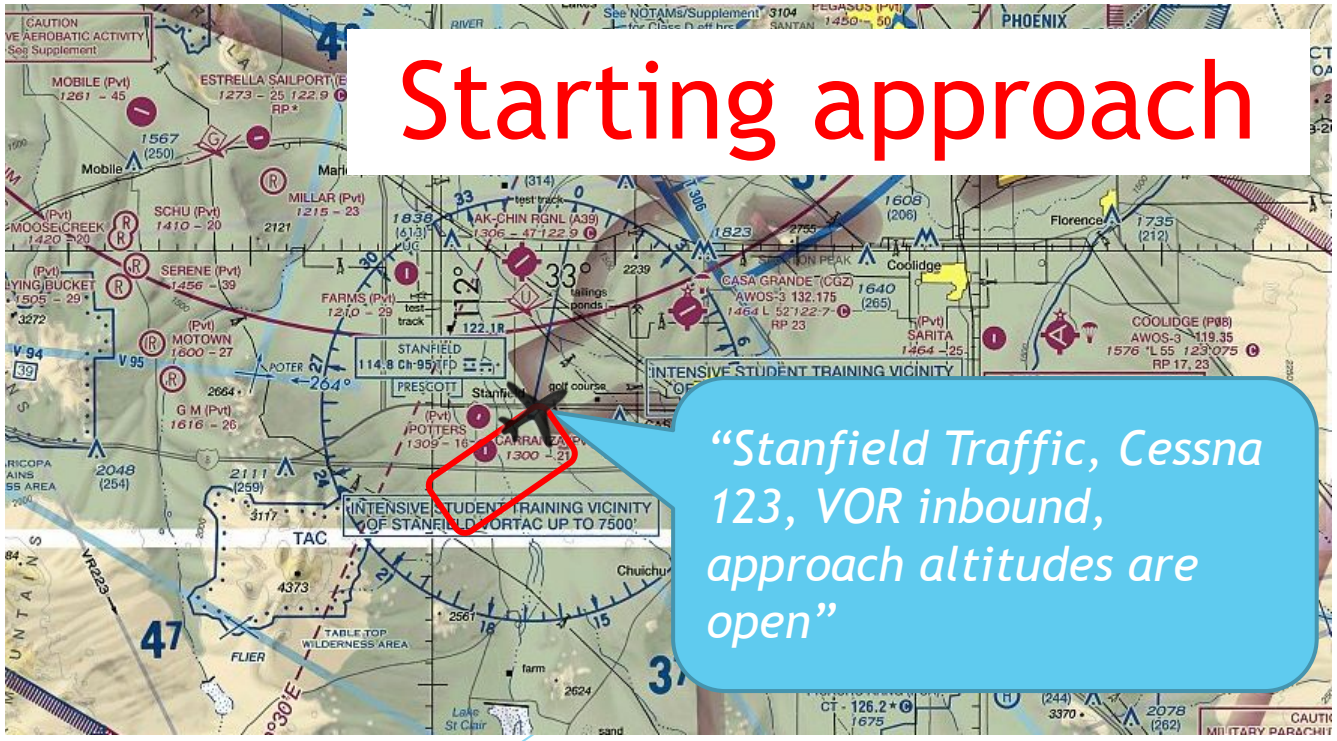
- Next call to be made when descending
  - Announce intentions and clearly announce vacated altitude is *OPEN*.
  - Wait until next altitude is *OPEN* before descending!



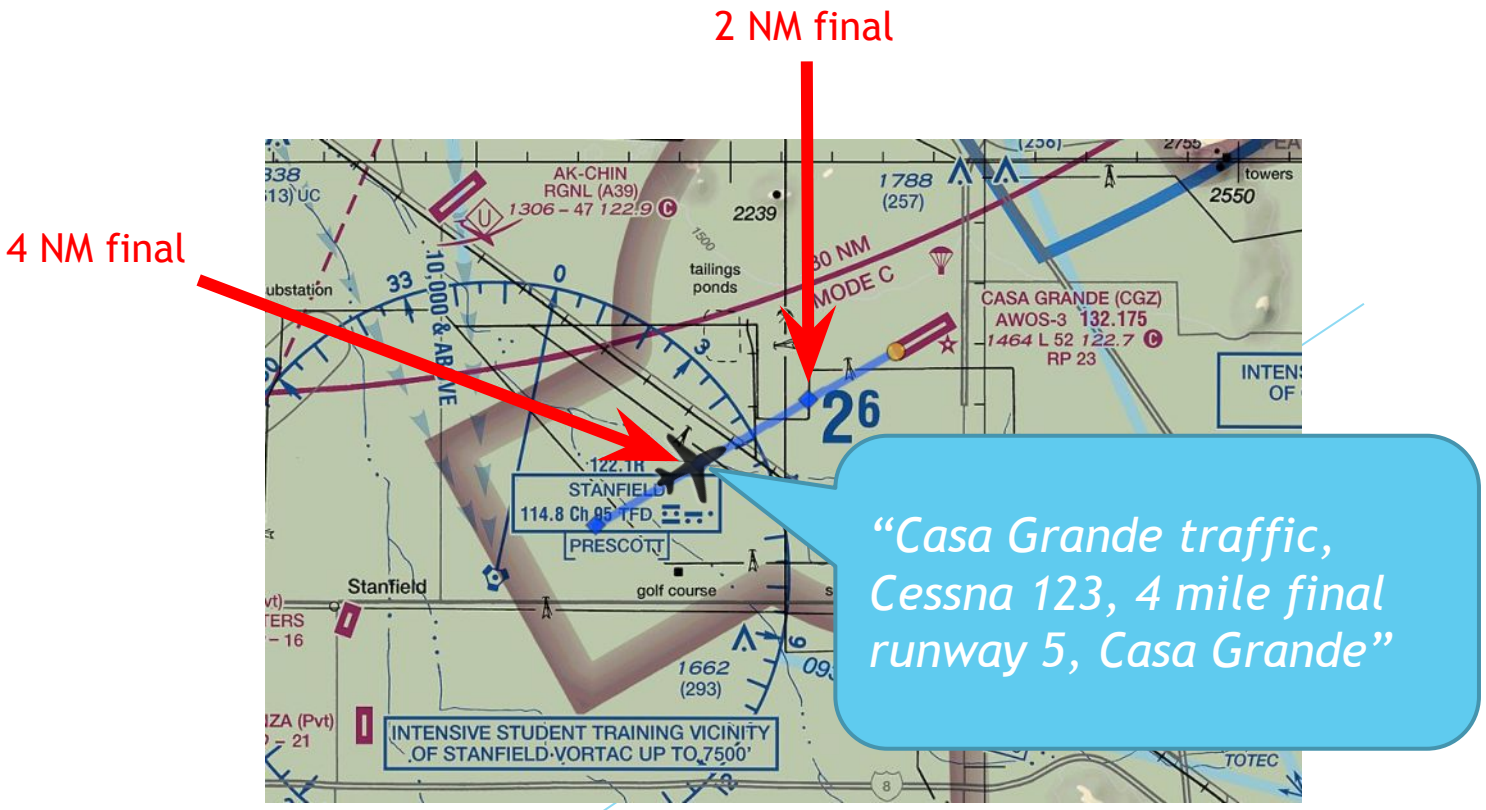
- Next call to be made when procedure turn inbound.
  - This call lets everyone know you are finished holding and about to shoot the approach.



- Next call to be made when starting the approach (overhead the TFD VOR).
  - Announce intentions and report vacated altitude *OPEN*.



- While on the approach, an inbound call should be made at a 4 NM and 2 NM final to allow VFR aircraft in the Casa Grande pattern to govern their approaches.
- Report to Casa Grande Traffic instead of Stanfield Traffic from this moment on.



- Next call to be made when 2 NM final.
  - Announce intentions and closely monitor Casa Grande traffic!

- The procedure turn inbound call should only be made in conjunction with the initiation of the instrument approach procedure and not when making circuits in the holding pattern.
- The procedure turn inbound callout should be made when the aircraft is established on the 228° radial **inbound** (pointing northeast), not at the beginning of the turn.
- FAA Pilot/Controller Glossary: PROCEDURE TURN INBOUND - That point of a procedure turn maneuver where course reversal has been completed and an aircraft is established inbound on the intermediate approach segment or final approach course.

When the top-of-stack is higher than 7,500 ft. MSL

Albuquerque Center uses the airspace above 7,500 ft. in the area around the Stanfield VOR. When The Stack gets that high, the aircraft taking the higher altitudes should stay at or below 7,500 and remain several miles clear of The Stack while making the appropriate radio calls with each altitude step-down. Once they have 7,500 or lower, they may enter the hold at Stanfield.

For example: An aircraft may say, “Cessna 345 is top-of-stack at 8,000 feet” when they are actually at 6,000 feet maneuvering 5 miles northwest of Stanfield. Once their stack altitude is low enough, they will then enter the hold and continue with normal radio calls.

To avoid confusion when monitoring traffic on cockpit displays, it may be beneficial to include something like, “Maneuvering 5 miles NW, waiting my turn.”

Holding-only is not available when top-of-stack is 7,000 feet or higher.

Summary of radio calls

1. About 10 NM out (state how many minutes out) - Request top-of-stack
2. 2 minutes out
3. Every altitude change
4. Procedure turn inbound (please follow the definition in the Pilot/Controller Glossary)
5. VOR inbound, approach altitudes open
6. 4 NM final to runway 05 at KCGZ
7. 2 NM final to runway 05 at KCGZ
8. Missed approach / Returning to The Stack

Stanfield VOR Procedures

IFR traffic

IFR aircraft arriving to and departing from KCGZ create additional hazards when VFR stack procedures are being utilized.

Pilots who are on an IFR flight plan are not authorized to follow the AFTW Stanfield Stack procedures. Doing so may lead to a pilot deviation.

The AFTW strongly recommends/requests flight schools and flight instructors to NOT conduct IFR flights to the Casa Grande Airport.

When weather conditions permit, the AFTW requests that arriving IFR aircraft cancel IFR more than 3 minutes out and then follow the AFTW Stanfield Stack procedures under visual flight rules.

For aircraft that need to stay IFR until landing and for IFR pilots who are not familiar with these procedures, the IFR Traffic Mitigation Procedure outlined below should be utilized.

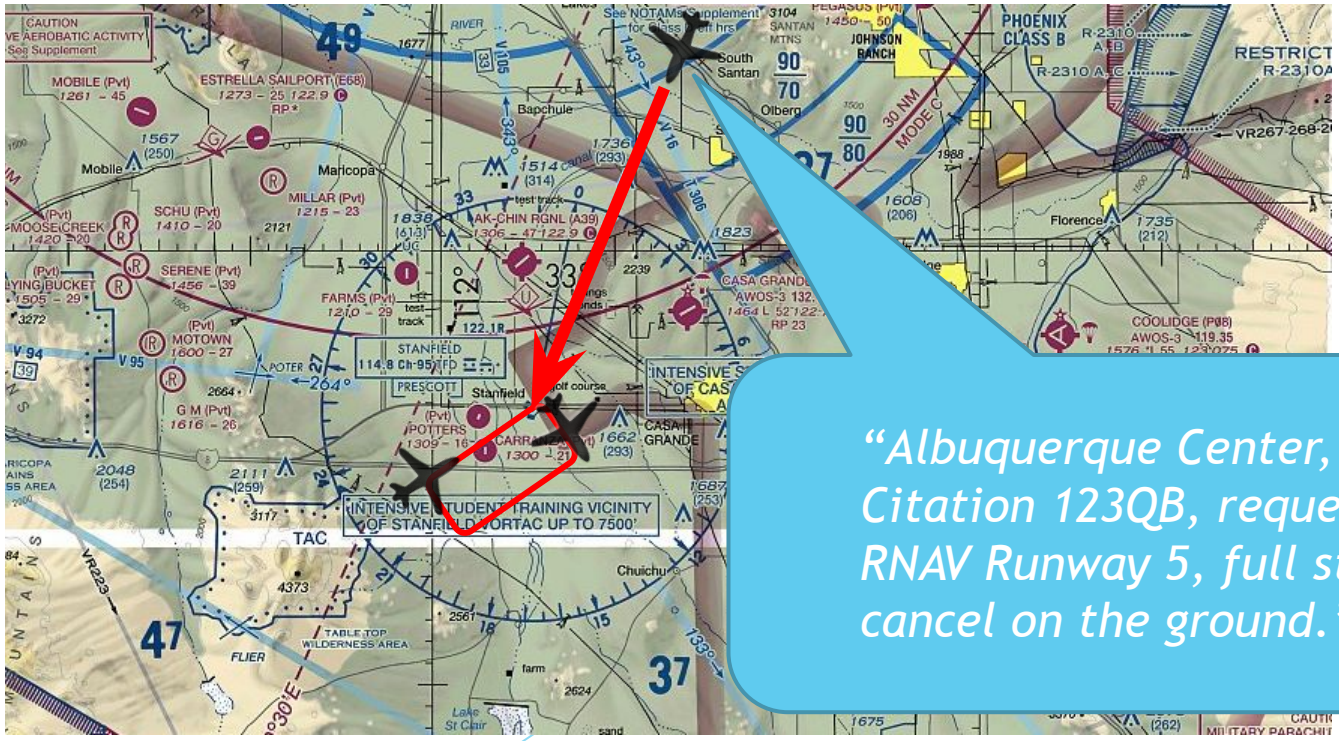
From FAA Albuquerque ARTCC
Letter to Airmen: LTA-26-01
Effective: 09-01-2026

"IFR aircraft should expect Albuquerque Center to issue an approach clearance that may include a restriction to cross TFD at 5,000 feet MSL and a change to advisory frequency (122.7) at least 10 NM from TFD. IFR aircraft should descend to 5,000 feet as soon as practicable to avoid descending through VFR holding stack altitudes. IFR aircraft should announce their position relative to TFD on 122.7, emphasizing their IFR status and type of aircraft, and continue to fly the approach as published while making standard position report calls as stated above. IFR aircraft should avoid climbing into The Stack and should continue to follow their ATC clearance until IFR services are terminated."

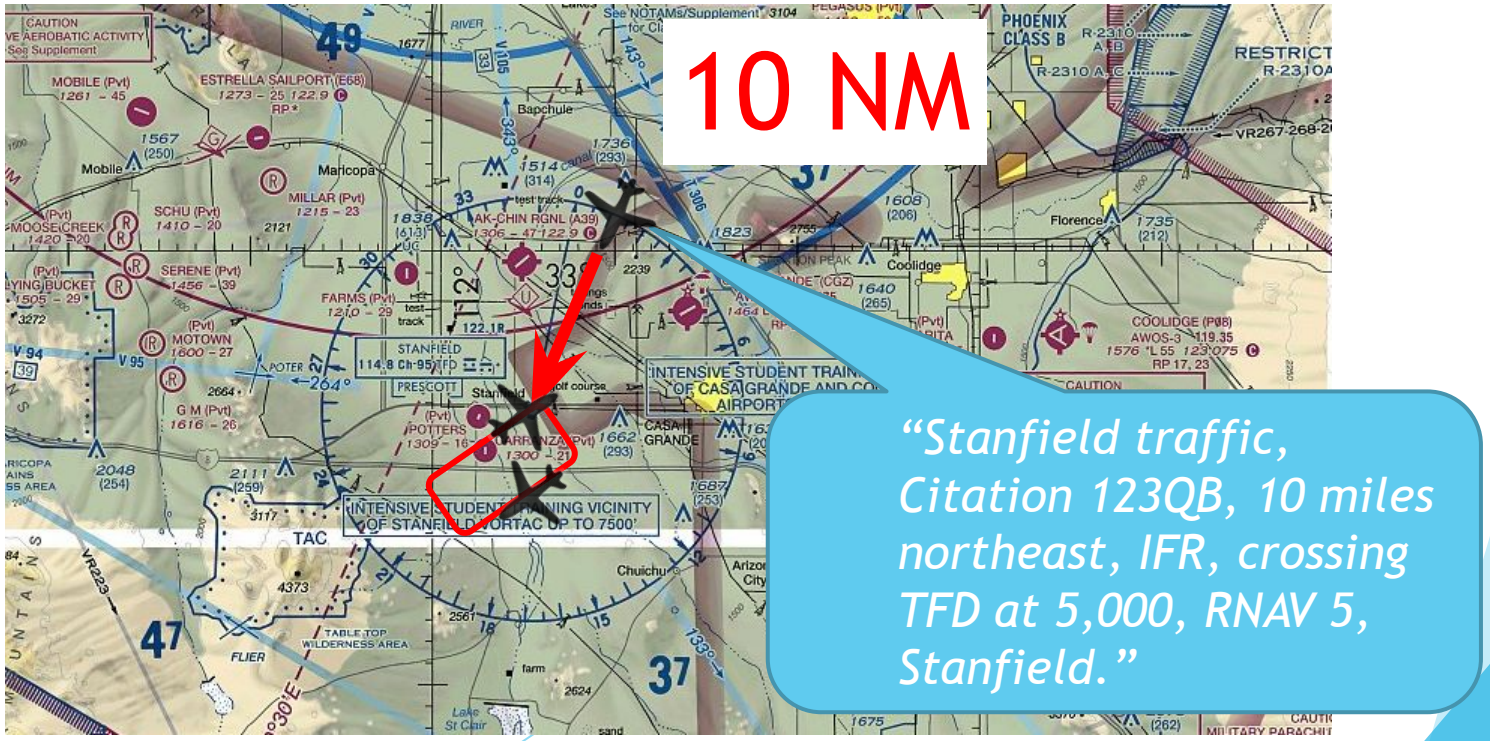
IFR Traffic Mitigation Procedure

When IFR aircraft are heard on 122.7, VFR aircraft at the top-of-stack are advised to announce, **“IFR inbound aircraft from the (direction). All traffic at 5,000 feet and below vacate The Stack.”** VFR aircraft at and below 5,000 feet are encouraged to maintain their current altitude and fly away from TFD and away from inbound IFR traffic. VFR aircraft at approach altitude may continue the approach if there is sufficient space with IFR aircraft in trail. Once the IFR aircraft commences the approach, VFR aircraft that had exited The Stack may re-enter the hold and resume normal stack operations.

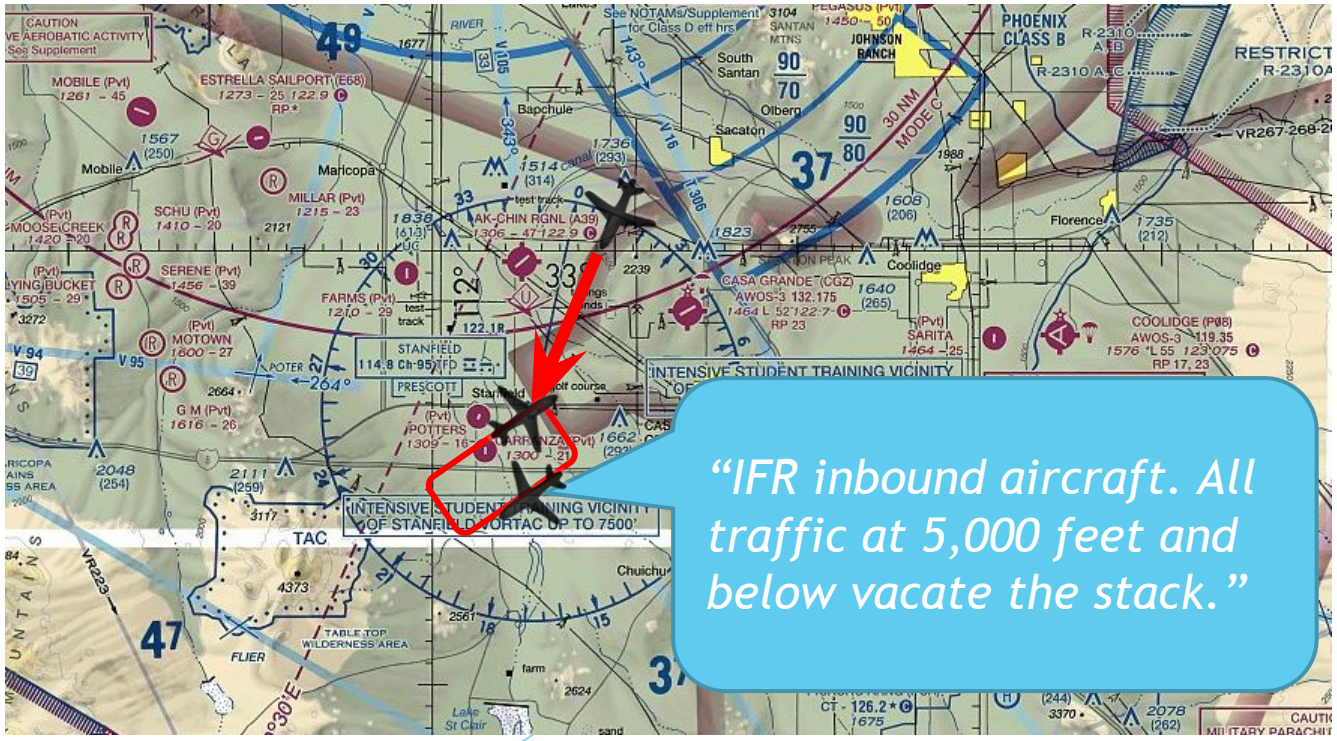
- **IFR aircraft**
- Before entering the TFD area:
  - Tell Albuquerque Center your requested approach, how it will terminate, and when you plan to cancel IFR.
  - Expect a clearance that may include crossing TFD at 5,000 ft. and a change to 122.7 at least 10 NM out.



- Make the first Stanfield advisory call on 122.7 about 10 NM from TFD.
  - State position, aircraft type and callsign, IFR status, altitude, approach and landing intention.
  - Descend to 5,000 ft. as soon as cleared by ATC.
  - Follow your ATC clearance until IFR services end.

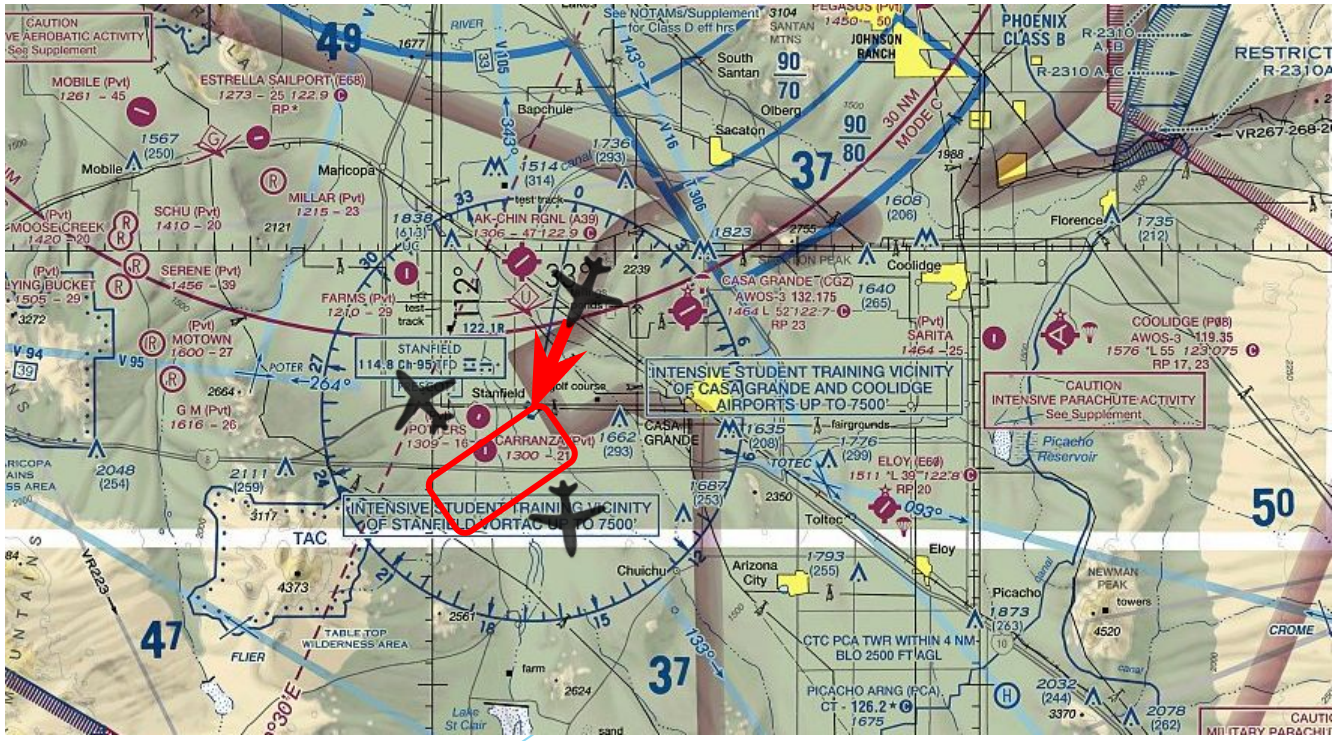


- The aircraft at the top of The Stack relays the IFR alert on 122.7.
  - The advisory applies to VFR Stack traffic at 5,000 ft. and below.
  - Every pilot continues to see and avoid and comply with right-of-way rules.

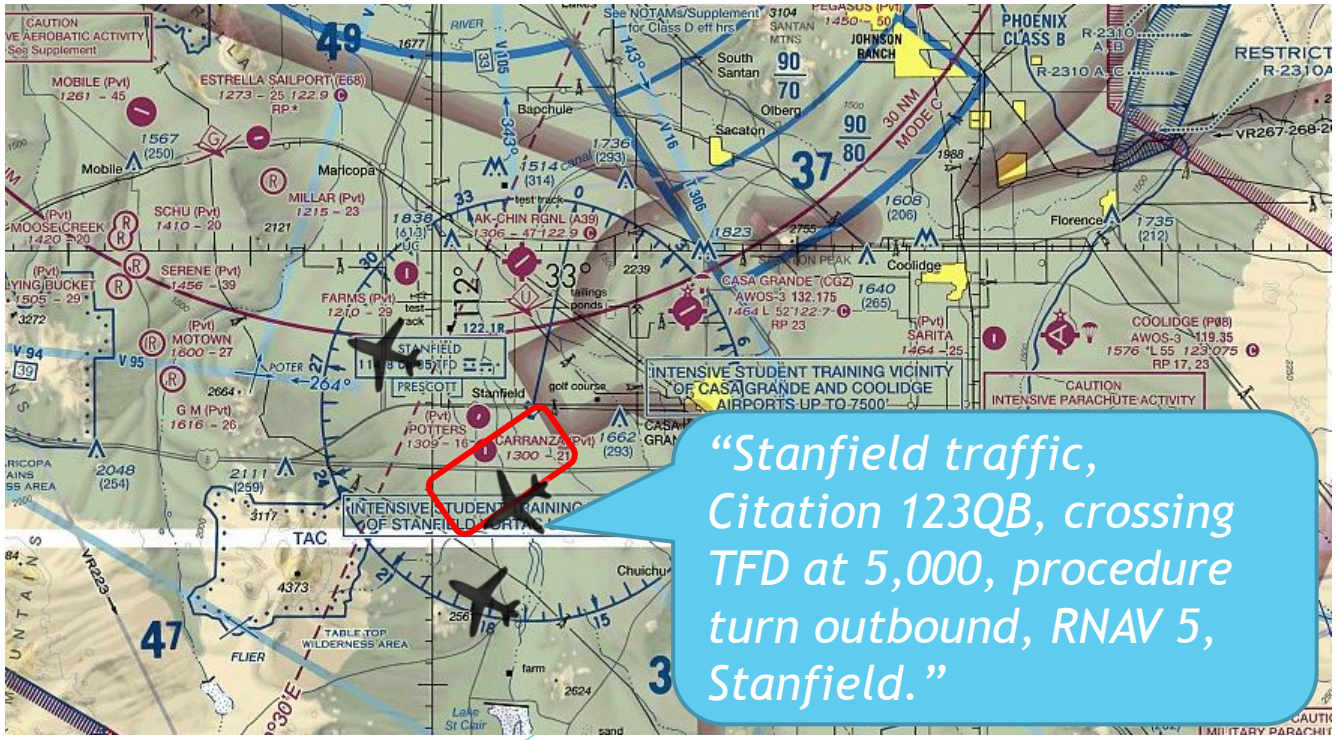


Stanfield VOR Procedures

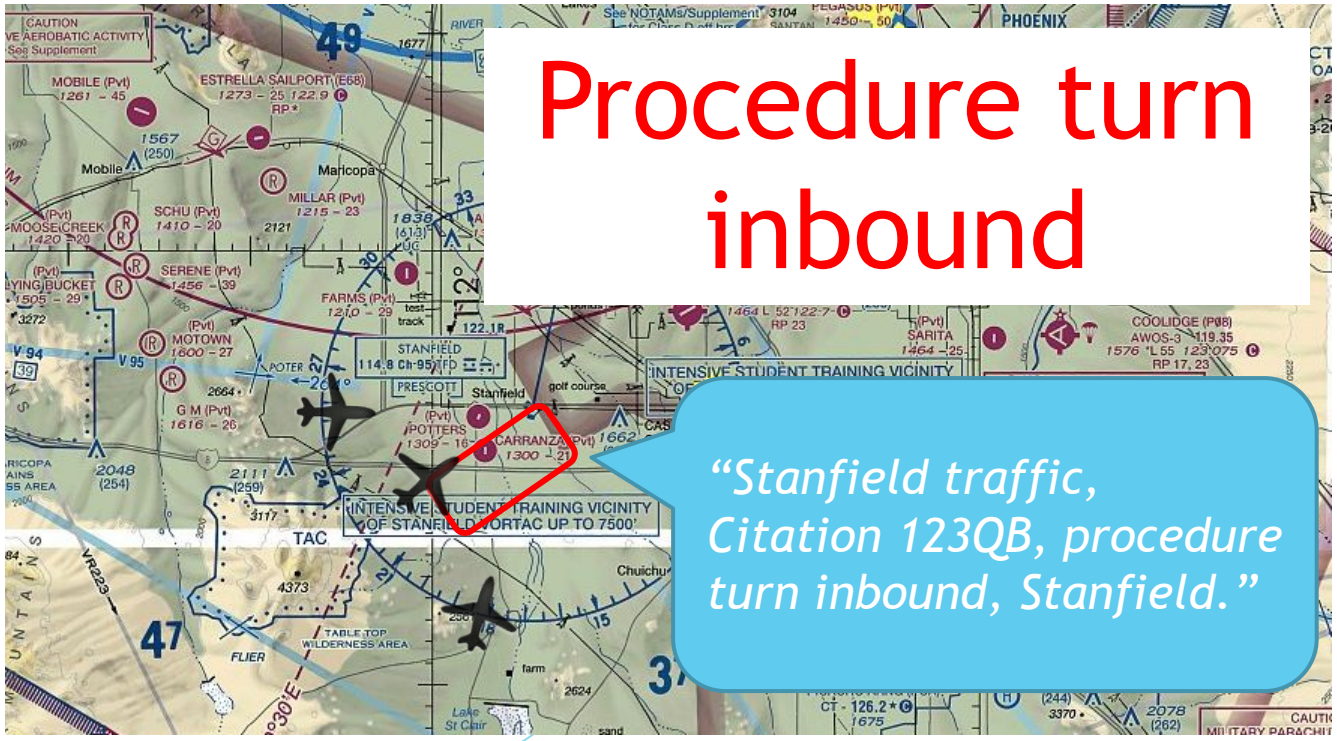
- VFR Stack aircraft at 5,000 ft. and below maintain altitude and fly away from TFD and the inbound IFR.
  - Do not climb or descend while vacating; maintain altitude to stay clear of other Stack traffic.



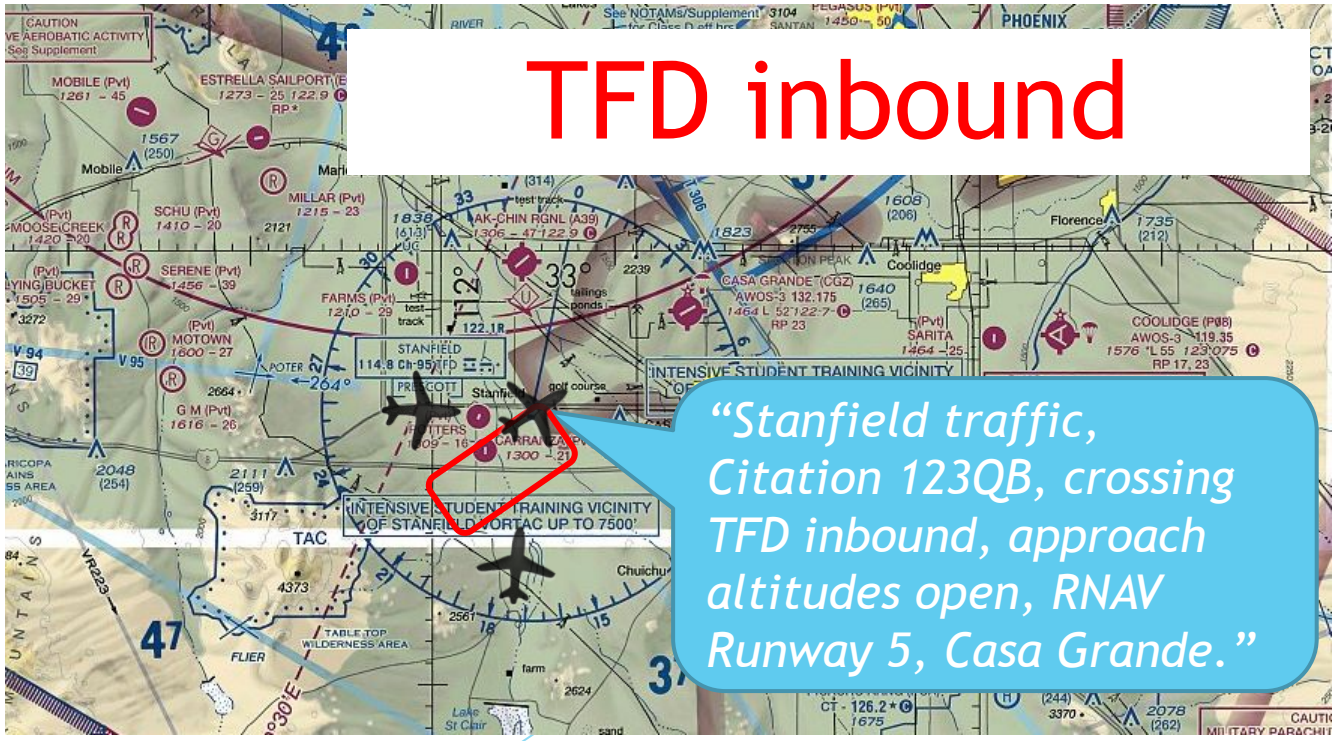
- The IFR aircraft crosses TFD at the cleared altitude and begins the published RNAV Runway 5 procedure.
  - Announce crossing TFD and the next maneuver on 122.7.
  - Avoid climbing into the stack and continue to comply with the ATC clearance.



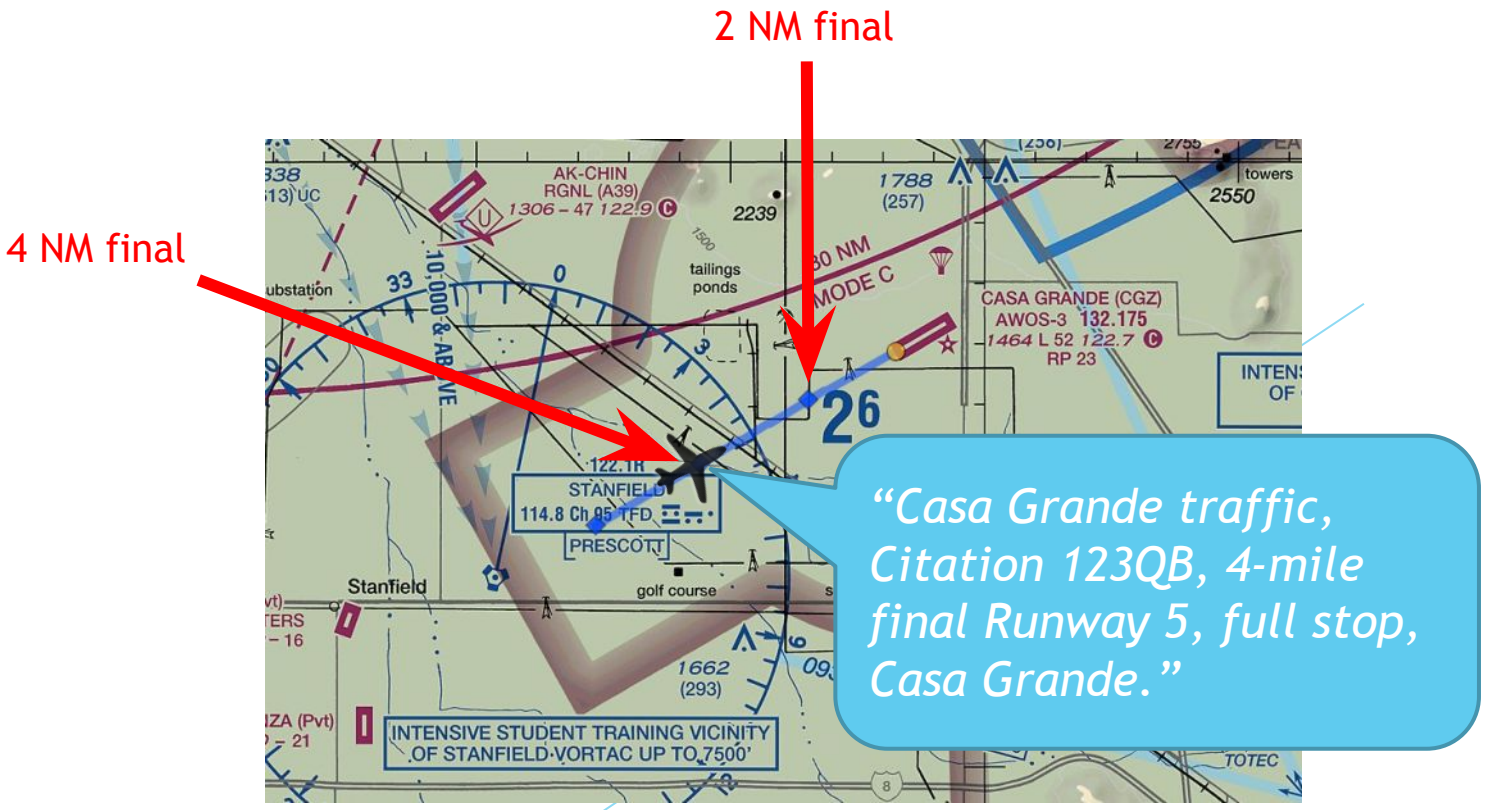
- Announce the procedure turn inbound.
  - This tells nearby traffic that the IFR aircraft is completing the hold-in-lieu and beginning the inbound approach segment.



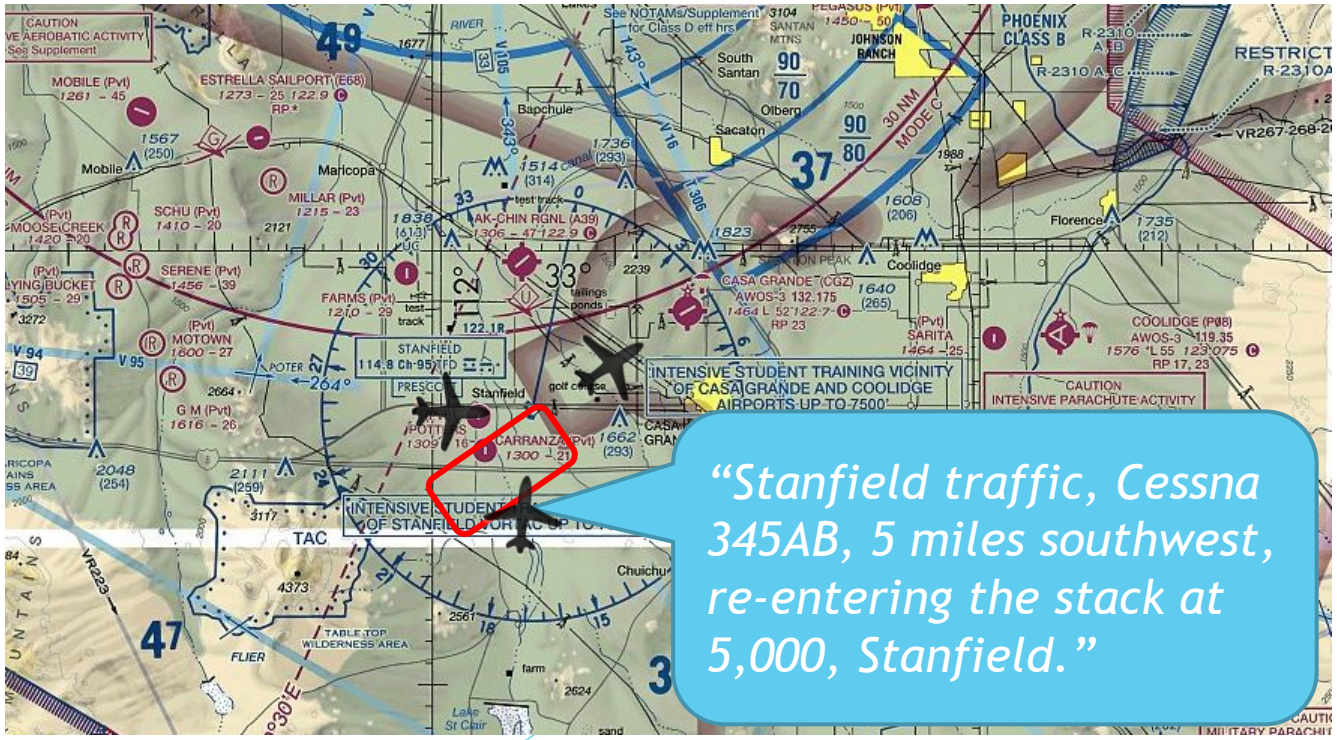
- Crossing TFD inbound, announce that the approach altitudes are open.
  - The IFR aircraft continues the published approach toward Casa Grande.



- Refer to “Casa Grande traffic” for the 4 NM and 2 NM final calls.
- Continue normal non-towered-airport sequencing, traffic scans and right-of-way compliance.



- Once the IFR aircraft has commenced the approach and the stack is clear, vacated VFR traffic may re-enter.
  - Return to the previously occupied altitude only after confirming it remains available.
  - Announce re-entry on 122.7 and continue normal stack calls.



Stanfield VOR Procedures

Additional Thoughts and Suggestions

A Few Notes About ADS-B

- ADS-B is a wonderful tool to help in determining the position of traffic we hear on frequency.
- It's human nature to fall into the mindset that everyone we see/hear is everyone that's there. This is a dangerous assumption.
- **Please keep your visual scan going and remember:**
  - Pilots are not required to be talking on CTAF around the Stanfield VOR.
  - Pilots may be operating legally in this area without ADS-B Out.
  - Even when it's installed and working, ADS-B is not flawless.

- Which runway is in use at CGZ?
  - Aircraft practicing instrument approaches typically accept up to a 10 knot tailwind component for runway 05 before using circling procedures for runway 23.
  - Some aircraft are not able to accept any tailwind for takeoff and/or landing. Please be courteous and give way to opposite direction traffic in the pattern.
  - Conform to all right-of-way rules.

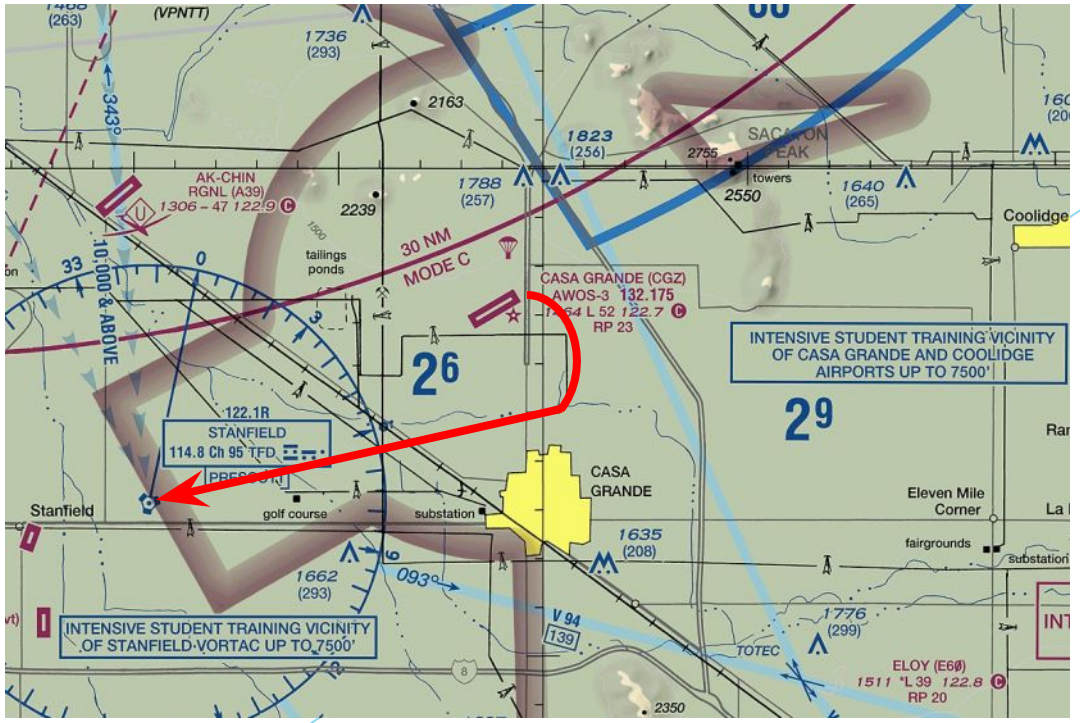
- Simulated radar vectors
  - If an instructor/evaluator elects to provide simulated radar vectors to the final approach course, they should remain outside The Stack while making the regular altitude calls and then proceed with the simulated vector to final once it's their turn at approach altitude.

- Missed Approach Procedures
  - When flying the published missed approach for runway 05, it is recommended to return to the VOR as top-of-stack.
  - If aircraft performance does not allow enough time to gain the required altitude, a turn to the south should be made to avoid traffic in The Stack.

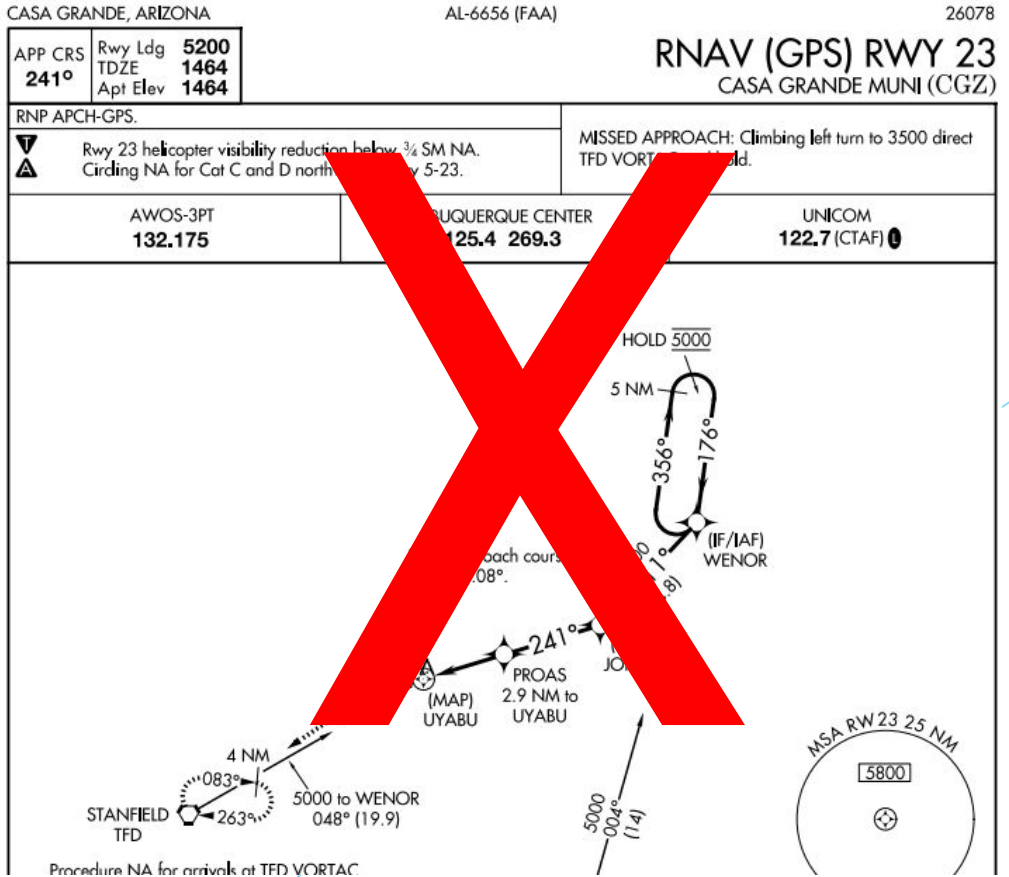
- Touch-and-go RWY 05 with Missed Approach Procedure
  - When flying the initial takeoff or touch-and-go, make a right downwind departure towards TFD VOR. This will keep you clear of the PJE north of the airport

Stanfield VOR Procedures

- When flying Missed Approach Procedure
  - Avoid incoming traffic on the IFR approaches
  - When feasible, we recommend going 2 NM south of KCGZ before turning toward TFD



- Due to risk of opposite direction approaches and frequent near-midair collisions, AFTW recommends that VFR training aircraft do not fly the GPS Rwy 23 approach into KCGZ.



- Have the landing light on from VOR inbound to KCGZ
- Announce intentions when the approach terminates so traffic following you can properly separate.
- Speak clearly
- Perform good visual lookout
- Be courteous and kind everyone
- Stay professional
- Have fun!

Closing Thoughts

- Please remember:
  - Do not conduct IFR training flights to CGZ.
  - These recommended procedures are for VFR aircraft only.
  - IFR aircraft must abide by ATC clearances and regulations.
  - Aircraft from out-of-state and pilots who are not familiar with these procedures will not be using them.
  - Please be patient and kind.

Keep your eyes out to see and avoid other traffic!


AFTW
ARIZONA FLIGHT TRAINING
WORKGROUP