

Special VFR (SVFR)

Special VFR (SVFR) (German: Sonder-VFR) refers to a visual flight in a control zone when meteorological conditions are worse than VMC. The procedure only exists in a control zone and is intended for taking off or landing under VFR at controlled airports when the weather outside the control zone is better. Traffic patterns are theoretically permitted under SVFR but are usually not feasible due to the additional work involved in separation. The procedure is therefore preferably used in combination with an entry or exit from the control zone.

As you know from the previous chapters, "normal" visual flights are only possible under the following conditions:

- Ceiling at least 1500ft AGL
- Ground visibility 5km

Logically, lower minima apply for SVFR:

- Ceiling at least 600ft AGL
- Ground visibility 1500 m (800m for rotorcraft)

In addition, a speed limit of 140 knots IAS applies for SVFR pilots. SVFR is also permitted at night in Germany.

Differences between SVFR and VFR:

- **Phraseology addition Special VFR:** "*LEAVE CONTROL ZONE **SPECIAL VFR** VIA F*"
- **Traffic patterns, touch and gos and low approaches** are theoretically possible, but usually not feasible due to the separation necessary to IFR.
- **Separation obligation to IFR**

While normal VFR traffic does not have to be separated from IFR, SVFR must be separated from IFR traffic. SVFR flights between each other do not have to be separated in Germany.

See also: [Radar separation](#)

The separation needed to IFR tends to make SVFR unpleasant and causes an enormous coordination effort between tower and approach. As soon as the SVFR pilot is in the control zone, we must ensure at all times that he maintains a distance of 3 NM from any IFR traffic or is separated from IFR traffic in another way. The tower's ability to do this is very limited, which is why, depending on local arrangements, the tower controller often needs clearance from the approach controller before clearing an SVFR flight.