

STANDARD OVERHEAD JOIN

/// A few tips for joining overhead. ///

In a standard left-hand circuit pattern, aircraft joining from the non-traffic side should be crossing closer to the threshold, rather than outside the pattern – normally called ‘right of centre’.

Pilots get a much clearer view down on to the field, but they’re also out of the way of any traffic that may be going around. There could also be high-performance types climbing towards them.

Once in the overhead, the pattern should be rectangular to ensure plenty of wings-level flying. This is to maximise your lookout capability – a constant turn diminishes it.

Don’t make the pattern too large. And the whole way around, you should be evaluating where the next potential threat could be joining from outside the pattern.

There are three standard calls. At 5–10 miles out, communicate height, position and intentions. If you say you’re “joining overhead” that does mean you’re doing an overhead join.

/// If an aerodrome has both left and right-hand circuits, the procedure involves flying into the overhead, keeping the aerodrome and runways on the left. //

Once you’re overhead, you again report your position, height and intentions, and that you’re joining for whatever runway you’ve deemed appropriate. You might be acknowledging your position relative to other traffic.

The next standard call is the downwind call when you’re established in the downwind for that pattern.

This doesn’t mean other calls shouldn’t be made. But make them only as required in terms of managing separation with other traffic.

Two big issues: radio congestion by pilots who ‘over-report’; and the reliance, by probably the same pilots, on radio calls while not looking out enough.

Lookout *is* the priority because this procedure is the appropriate one for NORDO aircraft when they’re joining at an unattended airfield.

Right-hand circuits

While most pilots negotiate the left-hand circuit overhead without too many issues, joining a right-hand circuit can be a different story.

If an aerodrome has both left and right-hand circuits, the procedure involves flying into the overhead, keeping the aerodrome and runways on the left.

If the right-hand pattern is in use, you should fly clear of the ‘overhead’ and then turn the aircraft to position for a right-hand joining procedure, as depicted in Diagram 1.

Still descend on the non-traffic side, still use the same radio calls, and fly the same shaped pattern. ➤

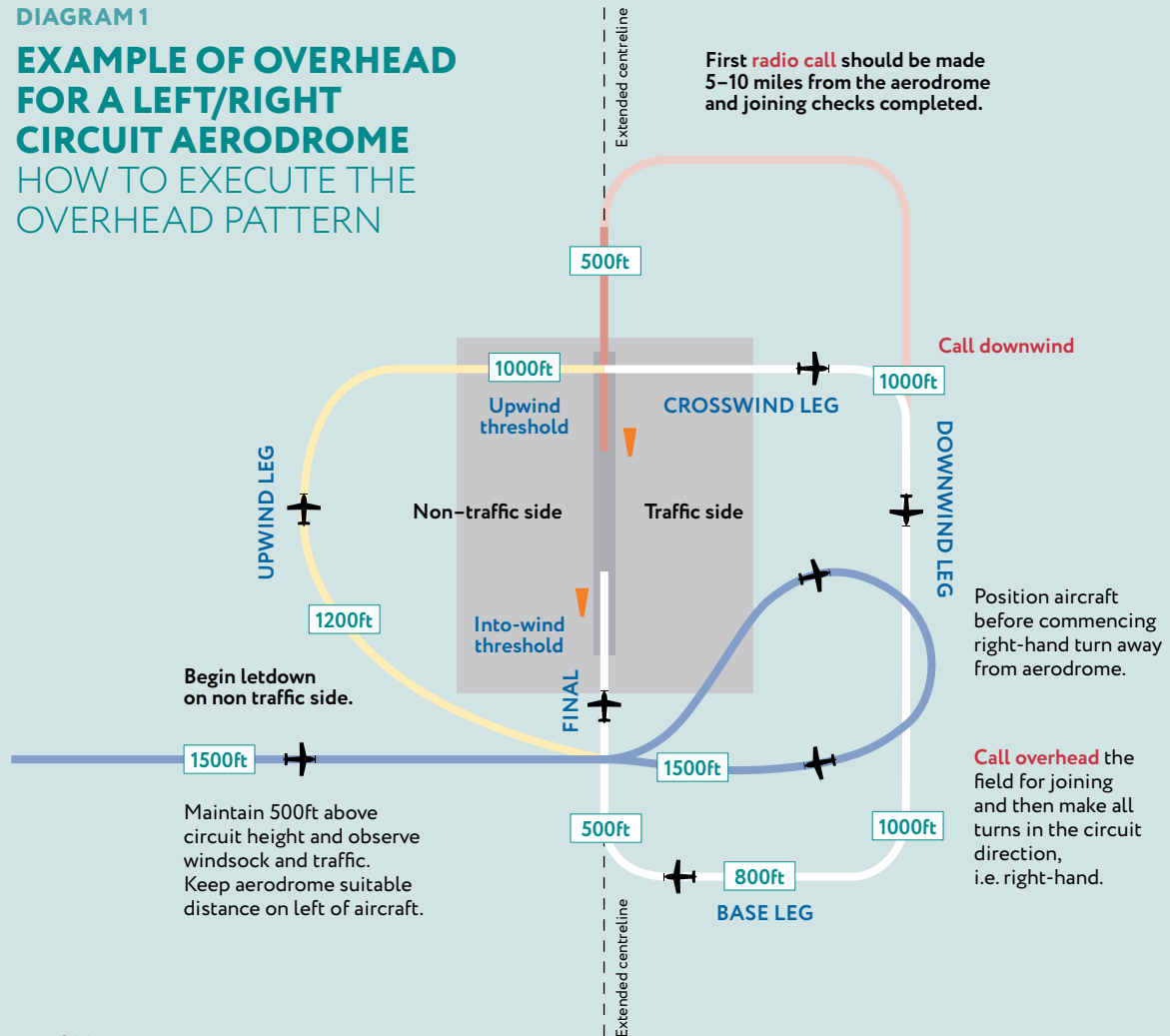
/// STANDARD OVERHEAD JOIN POSTER

To get a free 2016 ‘standard overhead join’ poster, email publications@caa.govt.nz.

DIAGRAM 1

EXAMPLE OF OVERHEAD FOR A LEFT/RIGHT CIRCUIT AERODROME

HOW TO EXECUTE THE OVERHEAD PATTERN



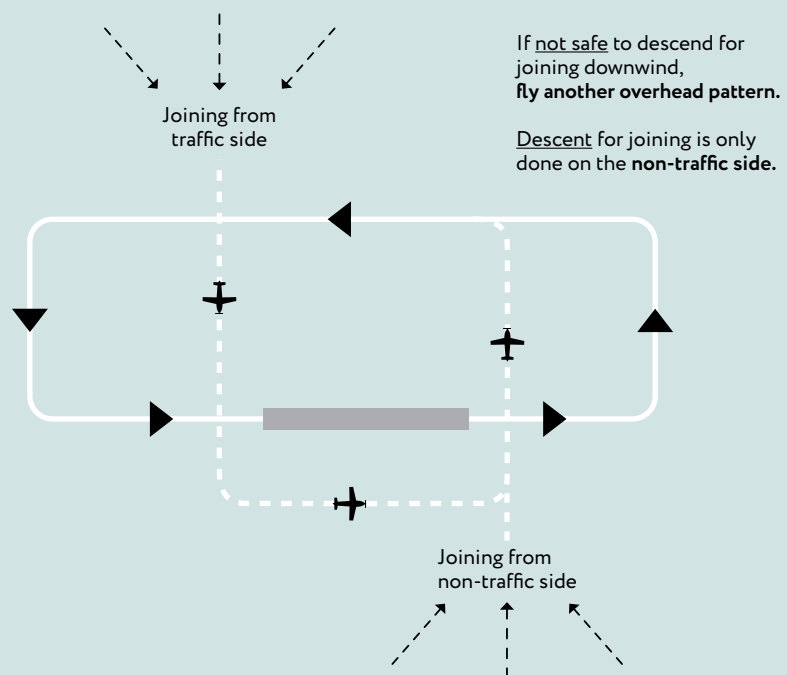
Source: CAA

DIAGRAM 2

EXAMPLE OF STANDARD OVERHEAD JOIN LEFT-HAND CIRCUIT PATTERN

Standard Overhead Join level is 500ft above circuit altitude.

Standard Overhead Join maximises wings-level flight in the overhead and circuit.



Source: AIPNZ