

CALLBACK

From NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System



Issue 559

August 2026



General aviation (GA) flight operations frequently occur in complex airspace, often described as busy Class B, C, D, or E airspace in conjunction with multiple, overlapping shelves and transition areas, heavy congested traffic, IFR and VFR, where multiple aircraft types, mission profiles, approaches, and varying levels of ATC services exist.

Operations in this environment have potential to increase workload, time pressure, distraction, fatigue, and confusion while decreasing situational awareness and perhaps altering judgment. Threats and hazards must be mitigated. Safety of flight is at stake. An identified GA threat or hazard extends beyond GA operations into every aviation contingent.

This month, *CALLBACK* shares reported incidents that occurred in or near complex airspace and involved GA aircraft. Open a sectional and the appropriate approach chart to fully digest these incidents and to grasp the gravity of consequences anticipated by each.

Part 91 – Flight Into Class Charlie

A solo private pilot, operating a small, single engine aircraft VFR in day VMC, described circumstances and rationale that led to an airspace incursion and some practical wisdom.

■ *While flying up the Big Sur Coast from the Big Sur VOR at 2,500', at approximately 15 miles south of the city of Carmel, I attempted to contact NorCal approach on 127.15 no fewer than four times in order to establish radio contact so I could transition the Monterey Class C airspace northbound towards Watsonville. I could hear NorCal responding to other aircraft, but NorCal did not respond to my calls. In order to avoid entering the Class C airspace outer ring, which has a floor of 1,500', I descended to 1,300'. I obtained the current altimeter setting for Monterey and entered it into my navigational instruments. I proceeded towards Carmel at 1,300'. Once I reached Pacific Grove, I turned east in order to continue following the coastline. The reason I turned east was because I am not comfortable flying at low altitude beyond gliding distance of land, had not planned on a long overwater leg, and was not equipped with waterborne lifesaving equipment. Shortly after I turned east to follow the coast along the Monterey shoreline, I realized that I had entered the core area of the Monterey Class*

C, which extended from ground/sea level up to 4,000'. I quickly performed a 180 degree turn and exited the Class C airspace, then resumed flying under the outer ring at 1,300'. The extent of the incursion into the core area was .5 mile (1/2 mile). The duration of the incursion was approximately 1 minute. I was monitoring the NorCal Frequency of 127.15 throughout. There was no radio traffic immediately before or after the incursion. I had my transponder on - as required - and broadcasting my position via ADS-B. I did not receive any call or callback from NorCal. The causes of this incursion were a) loss of situational awareness with respect to the airspace while hand-flying at low level over the water, b) the decision to descend and fly under the outer shelf of the Class C airspace rather than climb and overfly the top of all sectors of the Class C airspace, and c) lack of response from ATC to multiple requests on the appropriate frequency while south of Carmel along the coast. The lack of radio reception south of Carmel has been an issue throughout the many years that I have been flying in California. This situation should be remedied by installation of an ATC remote transceiver on an elevated ridge to the south of Carmel.

Part 91 – A Complex Traffic Funnel

This corporate medium transport Captain, operating IFR on approach, experienced a daytime conflict with another aircraft operating VFR. Both were in Class Echo beneath Class Bravo while in close proximity to one other.

■ *We were established on the RNAV (GPS) to HWD 28L, IMC on the final approach course and LPV path, but observed TCAS traffic ahead about 3 NM and 1000 feet below. While IMC, ATC advised us of the traffic, and advised they were not talking to them. We broke out at approximately 3900 MSL and acquired the VFR Aircraft Y at about 2 NM on a converging course, but below. Advised ATC that we had the traffic at 11 o'clock and converging in sight, and the airport. ATC cleared us for the visual 28L. About 2 seconds later we got a TA, followed by a TCAS RA about 3 seconds later. We had the traffic in sight, without conflict but still complied with the RA. The VFR traffic passed under our nose about 300 feet below. Once clear of the conflict we continued the visual approach. This is a common problem at this location. VFR traffic use this corridor to avoid*

Class B, C, and D airspace, as well as local terrain, often with minimal cloud clearance. The airspace design funnels VFR aircraft to this point, and they rarely are in radio communication with anyone. If on the approach IMC to HWD, it is not uncommon for ATC to cancel your approach clearance and vector you back around for another. If on the approach and you break out, it is immediately a priority to scan for VFR traffic. RAs happen regularly, especially on the weekends during daylight hours.

Parts 91 & 121 – Intruders in Class Bravo

A Government pilot, operating VFR under Part 91 in night VMC, described how the aircraft and a B747, IFR under Part 121, became mutual threats in Class Bravo.

■ Cessna 206 was performing operations approximately 2 nm N of ZZZ1 at 3500 MSL. At completion of assignment, the C206 requested repositioning to orbit ZZZ at 4,000 MSL with a Bravo Clearance. Request was made to ATC.... ATC directed the C206 to proceed on course and remain at 3500 until clear of traffic departing ZZZ2. When clear of traffic, ATC approved climb to 4000. Arriving over ZZZ at 4000, the C206 commenced an orbit with left hand turns. ATC directed the C206 to contact ATC on XXX.XY. C206 checked in with ATC and reported orbiting ZZZ at 4000. ATC acknowledged. Shortly after contacting ATC (approximately 30 seconds), the C206 received an ADS-B traffic alert of converging traffic at the same altitude. The crew observed a B747 at approximately 1-1.5-mile distance at about 2 o'clock. C206 crew disengaged autopilot and commenced a climb. From ADS-B data it appeared the B747 was also commencing a descent. The C206 received a traffic alert from ATC that a B747 was at 3 o'clock and 3700 feet. The C206 and B747 crossed with near zero horizontal separation and an estimated vertical separation of 400-500 feet. The position and flight path of the B747 appeared to be an off-normal situation not normally observed by the C206 crew, who routinely orbit ZZZ at 4000 during operations. Contributing events were: (1) The unusual flight path of the B747; (2) A hand-off of the C206 to another frequency without a traffic advisory; (3) A late hand-off that did not leave the C206 crew time to gain situational awareness of traffic; (4) A late traffic advisory after radio hand-off; (5) The C206 crew did not fully utilize ADS-B traffic data at a sufficient distance range to gain situational awareness; (6) The flight path of the B747 was similar to aircraft making visual approaches to RWY XX at ZZZ1, however, the altitude was approximately 2000 feet higher than the typical approach. This similarity of the flight path to normal operations made it difficult to quickly identify and interpret the conflict visually at night.

Part 135 – The Final Crossing?

A TRACON Controller observed a dangerous conflict in Class Echo beneath Class Bravo between a VFR aircraft and an IFR Part 135 medium-large jet transport performing an instrument approach. Class Delta was also at play, and an appeal was made to mitigate the recurring threat.

■ Aircraft X cleared for the RNAV (GPS) Y RWY 19 at 2000 and switched to TEB Tower at about an 8-mile final. Teterboro Tower shouted on the landline, "Approach, watch out for that 2000 VFR target." There was a 1200 code slightly northwest of the Teterboro Class Delta at 2000 and underneath the Bravo crossing the Runway 19 final on a collision course with Aircraft X. Neither aircraft were on my frequency, although I reached out to Aircraft X and the VFR to verify neither were on my frequency. The VFR appeared to take evasive action and climb while Aircraft X descended. I am begging, absolutely begging someone, an organization, any entity that cares about safety to review how dangerous the RNAV (GPS) Y RWY 19 is, as there is no protection for IFR aircraft along the final approach course between UNVIL and TUGGZ. At minimum there should be a cutout and/or VFR traffic required to call Teterboro Tower for advisories. Controllers have been screaming about this for years. Please, please fix this. Teterboro on some occasions is busier than Newark. We as Controllers should not be scrambling to separate a jet, or any large aircraft from a 1200 code in a critical phase of flight.

Part 91 – Beware the Drones

This solo, instrument rated private pilot, operating a low wing, single engine aircraft VFR in day VMC, noted a remarkable UAS event that occurred near complex airspace and triggered at least two airspace incursions.

■ Was returning from a flight to VNC [Venice Muni] with a friend, when he commented over the radio that he'd just had a near miss with a drone that wasn't putting out ADS-B. He noted that the drone was silver/shiny and was about half the size of his plane! In the course of discussing the drone, we were distracted and didn't notice that we'd entered the southeast region of the TPA Bravo 3,000' shelf at 5,500'. Upon noticing it, we quickly descended below the shelf and continued on to ZZZ.

The reports featured in CALLBACK are offered in the spirit of stimulating thought and discussion. While NASA ASRS does not verify or validate reports, we encourage you, our readers, to explore them and draw your own conclusions.

ASRS Alerts Issued in June 2026	
Subject of Alert	No. of Alerts
Aircraft or Aircraft Equipment	2
Airport Facility or Procedure	16
ATC Equipment or Procedure	8
Hazard to Flight	1
Other	8
TOTAL	35

559

A Monthly Safety
Newsletter from

The NASA
Aviation Safety
Reporting System

P.O. Box 189
Moffett Field, CA
94035-0189

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June 2026 Report Intake	
Air Carrier/Air Taxi Pilots	5,792
Flight Attendants	2,022
General Aviation Pilots	1,896
Military/Other	1,218
Controllers	432
Dispatchers	343
Mechanics	289
TOTAL	11,992