

Circling Refresher

We don't want to turn this into a treatise on circling, but any discussion of flying a VFR pattern after an instrument approach needs to quickly refer to the two diagrams at left.

The top one, of course, is the FAA circling maneuvers diagram, straight from the *Aeronautical Information Manual*. It depicts the FAA's recommended methods for aligning the airplane with the desired runway. The bottom one references the airspace protections—chiefly terrain and obstacle clearance—one can expect. The “r” denotes the radius of any turn being made to align the airplane with the runway and how the terrain and obstacle protections apply only within that radius.

As the article's main text notes, a possible situation involves running afoul of the FAA's dictum that all turns when approaching an airport be to the left, unless otherwise required at the airport. To comply with that requirement while turning right for runway alignment, we wouldn't cancel IFR until on the ground. Your mileage may vary.