



The Profeshunal FLIB?

“Funny little itinerant blip” is the acronym some controllers attach to the average general aviation airplane, though “funny” and “blip” often are replaced with something more...colorful. No matter—the point is many controllers seem to prefer working airliners to GA traffic. Why might that be?

The quick, easy answer is FLIBs aren’t as professional in their ATC communications as the other crews can be. Yes, there are exceptions—at both ends of the spectrum—but we’re really talking expectations. It’s not a stretch to say controllers are more likely to have communication problems with the average FLIB but not with the average airliner.

The reasons are numerous, but a lot of it comes down to experience, or lack of it. (For some ways to at least sound like you have more left-seat time than you may, see the sidebar on the next page.) If you can’t keep up with the controller, he or she has to change their workflow, slow down and repeat things. That’s stressful on them and doesn’t endear you to anyone on the frequency.

The other thing going on is that both the controller and the airliner crew are professionals: This is how they earn their living. In extreme situations, they can lose that job—or worse—if someone’s not listening or does something unexpected. Most of the time, however, it’s a matter of interrupting the flow—of both words and traffic—to accommodate a slower airplane and, perhaps, a slower pilot.