

# So...How Bumpy Is It?

The FAA's Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) categorizes turbulence into four major categories: light, moderate, severe and extreme:

Intensity	Aircraft Reaction	Reaction Inside Aircraft	Reporting Terminology/ Definitions
Light	<p>Momentary, slight, erratic changes in altitude and/or attitude: Report as light turbulence.</p> <p>—Or—</p> <p>Slight, rapid and somewhat rhythmic bumpiness without appreciable changes in altitude or attitude. Report as light chop.</p>	<p>Occupants may feel a slight strain against seat belts or shoulder straps. Unsecured objects may be displaced slightly. Food service maybe conducted and little or no difficulty is encountered in walking.</p>	<p><b>Occasional:</b> Less than one-third of the time.</p> <p><b>Intermittent:</b> One-third to two-thirds.</p> <p><b>Continuous:</b> More than two-thirds of the time.</p> <p>Pilots should report location(s), time (UTC), intensity, whether in or near clouds, altitude, type of aircraft and, when applicable, duration of turbulence.</p> <p>Duration may be based on time between two locations or over a single location.</p> <p>All locations should be readily identifiable.</p>
Moderate	<p>Similar to light turbulence but of greater intensity. Changes in altitude, attitude and/or airspeed occur but the aircraft remains in positive control at all times. Report as moderate turbulence.</p> <p>—Or—</p> <p>Similar to light chop but of greater intensity. Rapid bumps or jolts without appreciable changes in aircraft altitude or attitude. Report as moderate chop.</p>	<p>Occupants feel definite strains against seat belts or shoulder straps. Unsecured objects are dislodged. Food service and walking are difficult.</p>	
Severe	<p>Causes large, abrupt changes in altitude and/or attitude. It usually causes large variations in indicated airspeed. Aircraft may be momentarily out of control.</p>	<p>Occupants are forced violently against seat belts or shoulder straps. Unsecured objects are tossed about. Food service and walking are impossible.</p>	
Extreme	<p>The aircraft is violently tossed about and is practically impossible to control. It may cause structural damage.</p>	<p>You don't even want to think about it.</p>	