

General Information for Aircraft VFR Flights from Tucson to Alamos, Sonora, Mexico

Prepared by Hacienda de los Santos Resort & Spa

Before Leaving.....

Due to various Homeland Security procedural modification we suggest you visit the Baja Bush Pilots web site at www.bajabushpilots.com to get current information regarding crossing the U.S. border. The minimal membership fee will more than be worth its value on your first trip "South of the Border"....do it today. Plus, there are many vacation and flight options with the BBP, constant updates on regulatory changes, weather availability and up to date aviation news as it relates to Mexico.

Flight times are based upon a Cessna T206H, departing from Tucson International (KTUS), early morning flights are recommended during the summer to avoid weather, etc. Take at least \$400.00 dollars (in Pesos if possible). Remember your passport, as well as those of your passengers. Carry your passport on your person, be sure, before departing, that each passenger has their passport on their person and not in a suitcase or you will likely have a lengthy inspection of all suitcases at your Mexican AOE. Make three copies of your Mexican Insurance policy (coverage page only), three copies each, Air Worthiness Certificate, aircraft registration, Pilot license & Medical. With these copies you can request a permit for the entire calendar year, instead of your current visit (cost is the same). Make arrangements to purchase the U.S. Customs International permit before leaving on your trip and it will save you a great deal of time and frustration upon your return from Mexico. The US Customs International permit may be obtained in one of the following ways:

1. Go to the Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection web site to order a decal for your aircraft. The decal is valid for the calendar year and can be ordered a month or two before the end of the following year. Their web site is: http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/pleasure_boats/user_fee/user_fee_decal.xml
2. A new procedure in effect in 2009 and mandatory after May 17, 2009 is the eAPIS requirement which involves completing an electronic form prior to exiting the U.S. and also prior to the return. Various information, including names, citizenship and passport numbers must be on the manifest. To become registered as an eAPIS user go to the Homeland Security tutorial web site at: http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/inspections_carriers_facilities/apis/eapis_online_tutorial.xml

After using the tutorial above, then go to the log-in page at <https://eapis.cbp.dhs.gov/> to log-in. Very important, if you will usually be traveling with the same person(s), then you might list them as "crew" which will simplify the process for future flights. Your manifest will have a section which doesn't require many updates for the "Crew", a "Passenger" section which must be completed each time if you have passengers who are not listed on the "Crew" manifest. All lines must be completed, if no passengers place a zero on that line. If you, as pilot, are listed as the owner, then don't also pull your name up from the drop-down list of "Crew", it will be rejected and will state "There can only be one Pilot". At the end of the manifest the pilot's name from the ownership information will appear with any other "Crew" members and "Passengers".

You may file to leave the U.S. and to re-enter at the same time. This eliminates the need to locate a computer, etc., while in Mexico. If your information changes for the return flight then you must file another re-entry form with manifest. Most importantly, do not wait until the day before your flight to obtain a Password. Do this ahead of time and use the tutorial...it's very easy after one or two flights.

3. 406 MHz Requirement? Most G.A. aircraft are equipped with the old style 121.5 ELT's which are no longer being monitored by the US or Mexican government. As of April 2, 2010, Mexico requires that an automatic 406 MHz ELT be installed in aircraft.

Also, ask US Customs for their entry form, and then you can have it ready when deplaning on your return trip without additional delays.

The Night Before Your Flight.....

File your flight plan with Prescott Radio (1-866-226-3763) your flight is to Ciudad Obregon, Sonora, Mexico, advise that the destination is MMCM,(Ciudad Obregon, Sonora, Mexico), under remarks “advise Mexican Customs”, 2 hours enroute at 7,500 (150 knots) or higher. Identify the number of “US” on board. **IFR?** Note, if you are filing IFR you may not request direct to MMCN and must cross the MMHO VOR which lengthens the trip and minimum altitude south is 11,000’ and return to US is 12,000’.

Weather, Winds Aloft & Planning Sites.....

[ADDS Icing Prediction Link](#)

[Alamos Web Cam, Current Weather](#)

[Alaska Weather Cams](#)

[Aviationweather.gov](#)

[Historical Metars](#)

[IFR Charts, METARS, Route Planning \(http://skyvector.com/\)](http://skyvector.com/)

[ICAO Input MMCM, MMGM, MMHO, etc.](#)

[ICAO & IATA Airport Codes \(http://www.airport-technology.com/icao-codes/\)](http://www.airport-technology.com/icao-codes/)

[National Weather Service](#)

[NavCanada Flight Planning](#)

[NOAA Full Scale National Radar](#)

[Runway Finder](#)

[The Weather Channel \(Type 'Navojoa' for weather near Alamos\)](#)

[Turbulence Forecast – Air turbulence maps and forecasts](#)

[US Air Net aviation weather](#)

[Weather Underground - One of Jim's favorites](#)

[Weathermeister Free Site](#)

[Yahoo Weather Mexico](#)

By Subscription.....

[Accuweather Premium](#) Provides a 15-day outlook and hour-by-hour predictions for everything including ceilings.

[Weathertrap](#)

The Flight.....

After departing Tucson International (tower 118.3 or 119.0, ground 124.4, VOR 116.0), and being passed off by the tower to departure, request to leave the frequency for a couple of minutes. Contact Prescott Radio on 122.4 and open your flight plan for MMCN. Check your ETA, adjust as needed based upon what you filed the night before. At times there is some wave action (usually west to east) over the mountains. If this is the case, higher altitudes usually are smoother and you may wish to climb to 9,500’ or 11,500’. Diverting 5-15 degrees right of course will keep you over a valley and a highway, instead of being close to the ridge of mountains. Direct heading from KTUS is 156°, many prefer 160-170 to about 40 miles south of the border.

Some pilots prefer to fly over the Hermosillo (MMHO) VOR (112.8) and follow the four-lane highway to Ciudad Obregon (CEN). I usually fly direct which for the most part takes one down a long valley with several villages and dirt strips. If using the HMO route add 20 minutes to flight time. Either route you must notify HMO when within 50 miles on 121.4. They will probably assign a squawk of 1200 and have you notify them when reaching radial 090. On the initial call give your call sign preceded by “November”, then the DME, radial, altitude, point of departure, destination of Ciudad Obregon and type of aircraft. All controllers in Mexico speak English and are very helpful and courteous.

HMO will release you usually at 20 or 40 miles North of CEN and advise you to contact MMCN on frequency 118.3 (Approach, Tower & Ground) . The VOR is 115.1. When released by HMO, contact MMCN and give your “N” number, DME, radial, altitude, point of departure, Ciudad Obregon destination. Runway is 13/31 and is in excellent condition. If you need fuel, go to the building with three doors just north of the tower and park on the concrete portion of the ramp facing the tower (face south) parallel to the building in line with the fuel pump. *If you do not need fuel*, park in one of the marked spaces. If purchasing fuel, tell the attendant how many liters in each tank, wait until he starts pumping and then go to the third door (furthest door to the right) in the same building by the gas pump. This is where you advise the Commandante where you are coming from and where you are going. He will complete three forms for you, one of which is the Mexican federal form for flying in their airspace. The fee is slightly over \$500.00 pesos (fifty dollars) and increases every six months (*see above how to to obtain an annual permit for the same price*). The Commandante will give you two forms for Migracion (Immigration) and Aduana (Customs). Walk to the main terminal and stay outside the building until you get to the double glass doors near the second overhead passenger walkway. If locked, tap on the glass with your keys. Inside, walk to the second door on the left (Migracion) and they will want to see your passport and will prepare a Visa if you do not have one from a prior trip. Then go to the counter just outside of Migracion. Aduana will have you complete a white form with basic information. When complete they will ask for one person from the aircraft to push the RED/GREEN light. Each aircraft can bring in \$300.00 U.S. duty free per person, so usually there is no problem in this area. If the red light flashes, they will walk to the aircraft for an inspection, if you get a green light there is no physical inspection of the airplane. NEVER bring a *firearm or ammunition* into the country without a certificate for the firearm signed and approved by a Mexican General.

Calling Hacienda de los Santos with your ETA.....

Offer the inspector a dollar or two to call the hotel “Hacienda de Los Santos”. (Direct dial is 01-647-428-0222, if busy, 0217. Advise us of the time you expect to leave Ciudad Obregon. We then can advise local taxis *not* to meet your aircraft and we can send the complimentary hotel van to meet your aircraft and open the hangar, if space is available.

Next, return to the Commandantes office with the stamped papers and he will give you a copy to keep with your flight records. Go to the next door and pay the landing fee which is presently 100 pesos, more or less, (\$9-\$10) for a single engine Cessna. You will also pay for the fuel at this window, signing a receipt for fuel. If you are going to use a credit card there is an additional fee added, usually 3-4%. It’s okay to tip a dollar to the fuel attendant, but we do not recommend tipping others...sometimes that prompts further inspections and unnecessary delays. With a no wind condition you will probably taxi via “Bravo” to “13”, left turn-out puts you right on course on the 106 radial.

Alamos Coordinates are:

Runway 13 - N27 02 62, W 108 57 25, elevation 1,318'

Runway 3 - N27 02 06, W 108 56 63, elevation 1,298'

ICAO Identifier is MM-45

Return to your aircraft and advise the tower when ready to depart. With clear weather, I fly 106 degrees @ 3,500’ and no higher than 5,500’. It is 23 minutes to Alamos in the T206H. You will see a very large mountain about 60 miles from Ciudad Obregon on the 106 radial. That is Mt. Alamos, the largest mountain in Sonora, and is 6,500’ and just to the right of the village. Going through the saddle to the left of the mountain at 3,500’ is quite safe and you will see the village at this point. Ciudad Obregon usually wants you to contact them when the village is in sight, so acknowledge per their instructions. The 4,000’ new runway is very visible at about 11 o’clock to the village. The Unicom 122.8 should be used to advise other aircraft and is monitored some of the time. *Do not attempt* to come in after dark, there are no lights. If you are arriving close to dark, adjust your ETA accordingly, since the mountain shadows the village and sunset is earlier. The Unicom operator has limited English but will either advise of “one three” or “three one” runway. The airport has two military 182’s

based in Alamos and their parking is at the extreme north end of the ramp, beyond the hangar. We will meet your plane and assist with parking or entering the hangar. (Please don't blast the doors ...thanks)

Landing Alamos.....

A 12' windsock is on top of the hangar one across the runway from the hangar and a third sock (small one) just to the right side of runway "13". Also, if you fly over the village there is a flat hilltop with a large flag. A right base entry is best for "13" and left base entry for "31". Field Elevation is 1,350' and 2,400' is fine for pattern. The hotel hangar is available to the Hacienda guests at no charge, however there is a one time charge of \$15.00 by the city for aircraft in the hangar, or \$15.00 nightly charge if on the ramp.

To view a Citation Excel landing on runway "31" click on the following You Tube video
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzIKzv-KTho>

If you have made arrangements for complimentary hotel pick-up we will assist you putting your aircraft in the hangar, singles and light twins. The attendants name is Daniel, pronounced Danielle and he is very honest & helpful. You will be asked to sign-in and the tie-down is \$5.00 US a day, usually a \$5.00 tip is appreciated when you are ready to depart.

If you did not arrange for pick-up then a taxi will have driven out when you passed over the village. Their charge is \$5-\$7 US.....**you must ask first** or it may be considerably higher when you arrive at your destination. Tell the driver "Hotel Hacienda de Los Santos, Calle Molina". When arriving at the Hacienda you will be shown to your room and offered a brief tour of the facility. Please do not tip **any hotel employees** (except Spa personnel) during your stay. A tip for the employees upon leaving may be handled in Reception and 100% goes to the staff.

Non-Hacienda guests may rent hanger space on an "as available basis" for \$25.00 per night.

For additional information please email Jim Swickard at:
jnswick@aol.com

There are many sources for weather information for Mexico, however this is Jim's "One Stop" favorite on Wunderground. <http://www.wunderground.com/global/Region/CA/2xpxIRSatellite.html>.

By clicking on the Weather Animation, you can get wind flow, plus it's easy to pull up other data on Sonora"