

Request a Deviation from the Cleared Route

- ① PILOT
Kansas City Center, Cirrus Eight Eight Seven Two Bravo, request deviation left twenty degrees for weather ahead.
- ② CENTER CONTROLLER
Cirrus Seven Two Bravo. Approved as requested. Report when back on course.
- ③ PILOT
Turning twenty left. We'll report when back on course. Cirrus Seven Two Bravo.
- ④ CENTER CONTROLLER
Cirrus Seven Two Bravo. I had a Baron go through the weather at your eleven to two o'clock, two five miles. At nine thousand, they reported light precip and moderate turbulence.
- ⑤ PILOT
Roger. Cirrus Seven Two Bravo.

One irony of instrument flying is you earn the right to fly through the weather—and then do your best to stay out of it for safety and comfort. This means the most common reason for requesting a temporary deviation from your cleared route is getting around weather. The basic format is:

[Facility], [Call sign], request [Details of deviation], for [Reason].

Deviations could be specific, “request twenty degrees right” or “request direct [fix] to avoid weather”; or general, “request maneuvering right of course for the next twenty miles or so to stay visual between buildups.” The reason could be serious, such as weather you must avoid, or casual, such as getting a better view of Niagara Falls on a clear day. Because you’re on an IFR flight plan, you must get permission to deviate from course for any reason.

The reason is important because ATC must weigh your request against the constraints of other traffic and airspace. Deviations around weather are rarely delayed and almost never refused. Sightseeing ... well, that doesn’t have as much clout.

