

Unicom Plan Adopted

New frequencies
should mean end
to congestion
on 122.8

■ ■ A plan to ease radio congestion on the primary Unicom frequency, 122.8 MHz, has been adopted by the Federal Communications Commission.

The changes, formally proposed about a year ago and adopted as proposed, open two new frequencies for Unicom use at uncontrolled airports. The new frequencies are 122.7 and 123.0. Operators currently broadcasting on 122.8 may apply to the FCC for either of the new frequencies. Although a frequency may be requested, the FCC still retains the right to make a final frequency assignment.

Unicom communication at control tower airports, which have up to now been on 123.0 MHz, will be handled on 122.95 under the new plan.

A frequency commonly used for communication between aircraft in flight, 122.9 (Multicom), will remain for that purpose, and will be supplemented by 122.85 and 122.75 (the latter after Jan. 1, 1978).

The new frequency designations were adopted in April and became effective May 20. They will be put into operation over a two-year period, with most changeovers completed by Feb. 1, 1979.

Over 2,000 ground stations in the U.S. are currently licensed to use the 122.8 frequency for Unicom communications. As a result, around larger cities, blocked transmissions and garbled messages have become the norm for Unicom. In 1973, the PILOT detailed the problem of Unicom clutter, and AOPA's policy and technical planning department went to work on a solution. The plan just adopted by the communications commission basically reflects AOPA's proposal for a solution.

If the new plan works, there should be no more than 700 stations using any one of the primary Unicom frequencies. AOPA's Victor J. Kayne, senior vice president for policy and technical planning, said the reduction of congestion will offer both better service and more safety for pilots.

Navigation charts have begun showing the actual Unicom frequency with each airport's identification block, and are dropping the old "U-1" and "U-2" designations.

Unicom Expansion

Under the amended aeronautical advisory (Unicom) frequency plan, the following allocations will be made:

- 122.700 MHz—Aeronautical Advisory (AA), uncontrolled fields.
- 122.725 MHz—AA, private airports not open to the public.
- 122.750 MHz—AA, private airports not open to the public and air-to-air communications (air-to-air usage is permitted only after January 1, 1978).
- 122.775 MHz—Future AA or multicom use.
- 122.800 MHz—AA, uncontrolled airports.
- 122.825 MHz—Future AA or multicom use.
- 122.850 MHz—Multicom.
- 122.875 MHz—Future AA or multicom use.
- 122.900 MHz—Multicom.
- 122.925 MHz—Multicom-Natural Resources.
- 122.950 MHz—AA, airports with control tower.
- 122.975 MHz—AA, high altitude.
- 123.000 MHz—AA, uncontrolled airports.
- 123.025 MHz—Future AA or multicom use.
- 123.050 MHz—AA, heliports.
- 123.075 MHz—AA, heliports.