VFR Transition Level & Altimeter Settings - Reference Guide

Created by LETSFLYVFR.com

What is the Transition Level?

The Transition Level (TL) is the lowest flight level above the Transition Altitude (TA) at which aircraft use the standard pressure setting (1013.25 hPa or 29.92 inHg).

What is the Transition Altitude?

The Transition Altitude is the altitude at or below which the aircraft altitude is referenced to local QNH (actual atmospheric pressure).

Transition Layer:

The space between the Transition Altitude and the Transition Level acts as a buffer to separate climbing and descending aircraft during pressure changes.

Class A Airspace:

Class A airspace begins above the Transition Level and is always flown using Flight Levels (FL) with standard pressure. VFR flight is not permitted in Class A airspace.

Altimeter Settings Summary

Phase	Altitude Range	Altimeter Setting	Altitude Displayed
Climb	Below TA	Local QNH	Altitude (e.g., 6,000 ft)
Cruise	Above TL	1013.25 hPa / 29.92 inHg	Flight Level (e.g., FL80)
Descent	Through TL to TA	Switch back to QNH	Altitude (e.g., 3,000 ft)

Transition Altitudes by Country/Region

Country	Transition Altitude	Typical Transition Level	Notes
USA	18,000 ft	FL180	Class A starts at FL180
UK	3,000 ft (varies)	FL40-FL60	Check ATIS or chart
Europe	3,000-5,000 ft	FL60-FL80	Varies per country
Australia	10,000 ft	FL110	Check ERSA & ATC