

CFIT Scenario Handout – Southwest of Orlando Executive (KORL)

Scenario Summary

You are 14 NM southwest of Orlando Executive, tracking 240°.

Three threats converge:

1. **Obstacle** – 1,195 ft tower, 8 NM off your left wing. Obstruction lights are out (NOTAM). Invisible against dark terrain.
2. **Airspace** – New **30 NM TFR** from downtown Orlando, surface to 5,000 ft MSL, active now. Your course will cross the ring in 4 minutes.
3. **Automation** – GFC 700 autopilot still in **Vertical Speed** mode from earlier descent. You expect level-off at 2,500 ft, but it's quietly taking you lower — toward the unlit tower.
Additional pressure: Behind you, lowering ceilings are pushing you toward the Class B shelf; the only clear VFR corridor is narrowing.

Your Task

Prevent these threats from combining into a **Controlled Flight Into Terrain (CFIT)** accident.

Ideal Response Flow – Annotated to Aviate–Navigate–Communicate

| Step | Action | Mantra | Rationale |
|------|--|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Immediate Collision Avoidance – Correct automation mode or disconnect autopilot; hand-fly to maintain safe altitude clear of tower. | Aviate | Aircraft control and obstacle clearance come first. |
| 2 | Stabilize the Flight Path – Confirm altitude, attitude, and heading; verify obstacle clearance visually and on instruments. | Aviate | Stability before strategy — no navigation or comms until the aircraft is safe. |
| 3 | Manage the Airspace Threat – Turn to avoid TFR boundary; confirm clearance on moving map/EFB. | Navigate | Avoid regulatory violation and maintain legal, safe airspace. |
| 4 | Account for Weather Compression – Decide early whether to continue in corridor or divert before being trapped. | Navigate | Strategic positioning to preserve safe options. |
| 5 | Integrate Hazards & Communicate – Once stable and clear, advise ATC of position, intentions, and deviations. | Communicate | Coordinate for assistance and traffic separation after threats are under control. |

Key Takeaways

- **Aviate first:** Stop the descent, clear the tower.
- **Navigate next:** Avoid TFR and weather traps.
- **Communicate last:** Only after you're stable and safe.
- **Mode awareness** is critical — confirm armed/active modes before relying on automation.
- **NOTAMs matter** — invisible obstacles can be lethal at night.
- **Weather compression** can remove your “outs” faster than you think.