

GETTIN' THERE

aviation information for local destinations

Destination:

Princeton (CYDC)

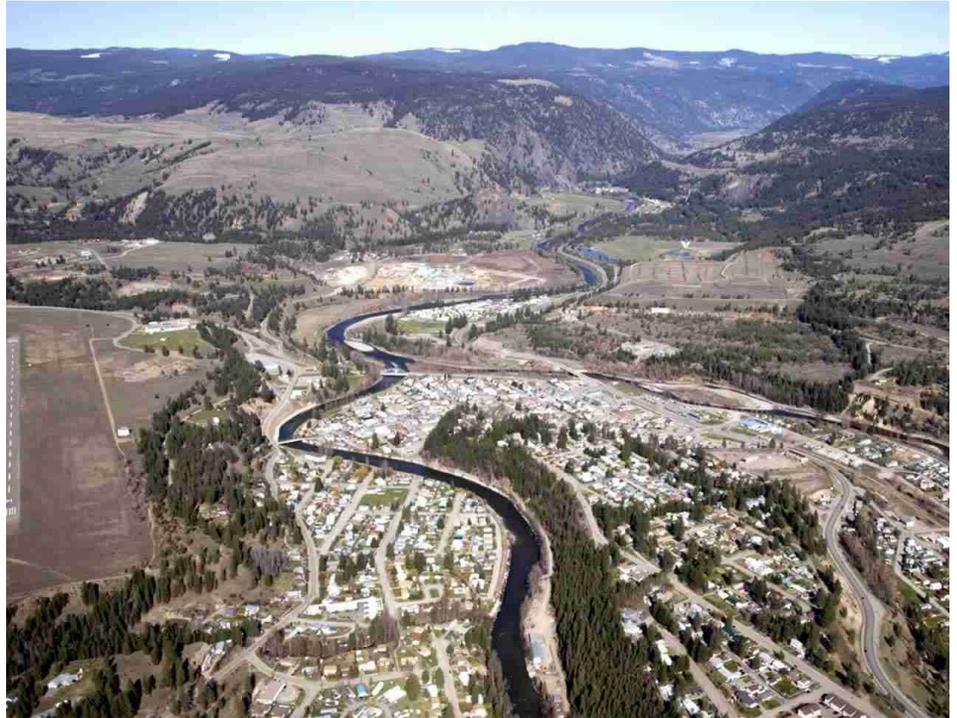
Why Go?

Princeton is a great flight when you want to stretch your wings and look further afield. About 1.25 hrs direct or 1.8 hrs via the VFR Route from Victoria, Princeton is a single runway airport where they really go out of their way to look after General Aviation pilots. They have a modern terminal building that is complete with kitchen, wireless, washrooms, comfy furniture, etc. and even have courtesy cars that visiting pilots can sign out and drive into town with.

Whether you choose to fly direct from Hope or follow the VFR route along the Hope – Princeton Highway you'll experience a flight that is just a little more challenging and good practice for your mountain flying skills. **NOTE:** If you're flying Club aircraft you are required to have taken the Mountain Flying Course to do this flight.

Getting There

There are basically two routes you can take when flying to Princeton, and the difference is what you decide to do when



(image from www.princetonairport.ca)

you get to Hope. You can go direct over top of the mountains to Princeton or you can take the VFR route along the Hope – Princeton Highway. Both routes are popular so I'll cover both of them here. You might consider going direct one way and the VFR route the other.

Regardless of which routing you're planning on, the trip from Victoria to Hope is essentially the same. If you're planning on the Direct route make sure you request an altitude of 7500 or higher on your initial contact with Victoria Terminal. They may not give it to you right away but they will work you up there eventually.

Plan your routing to stay south of Abbotsford – it will help you miss some of the special use areas. Victoria Terminal will release you somewhere after Abbotsford. If you're going Direct they'll pass you off to Vancouver Centre who will provide you with a "Flight Following" service. If you're planning on the VFR route, resist the urge to descend; staying at altitude will help you miss the low level traffic going in and out of Chilliwack.

As you approach Hope you need to maintain a listening watch on the Hope frequency and broadcast your location and

intentions. There can be a lot of glider activity and transiting VFR traffic in this area and you need to stay vigilant. It's a good idea to check NOTAMS prior to departure to see if the gliding special use area is active for the time you'll be passing through.

If you're taking the VFR route you'll pass over the town, proceed east for a short distance and then take care to ensure you pick the correct valley on your right. Check your compass heading to confirm. The valley rises as you head towards Manning Park so watch your altitude. This is a gorgeous route and is great fun to fly as you follow the twists and turns through the valleys. This is a popular route so be on the lookout for other traffic at all times.

If you're taking the Direct route, you'll pass over the town; once east of Hope you'll set your course for Princeton. If you're getting Flight Following from Vancouver Centre, they may, depending on your altitude, cut you loose about 10 miles east of Hope. You can reconnect with them later in the flight but it's not necessary as by the time you can contact them again you'll want to descend. When you're about 8 nm back from Princ-

eton you'll cross a ridge and a valley will open up. This is a good place to broadcast your intentions and to start a descent. Descending directly towards the airport will be a fairly aggressive descent so you're much better to circle out in the valley to keep your descent more comfortable.

Regardless of which route you've taken as you approach the airport you'll want to broadcast your intentions. Princeton is uncontrolled so follow the Uncontrolled Aerodrome procedures to overfly the field, determine the runway and land. Oh, and you're not on the coast anymore... check that Princeton's elevation is 2,298 ft., which puts the circuit altitude at 3,300 ft.

Once you're down, taxi to the terminal building. You can park out front of the terminal. In fact, there are even tie-downs buried in the ground in front. (I did say they look after you, didn't I?). Check out the Terminal building, sign out the car & go to town for a burger, visit the weather station...there's lots to do.

Local Knowledge

Flying into Princeton is a great experience no matter which route you choose. Here are a few things to be aware of that you may not find written down:

- The runway can be a bit "wavy" and has numerous tarred crack repairs.
- On departure, if you're planning the Direct route back, you're better off climbing in the valley and then proceeding on course.

Weather

Princeton has a METAR but no TAF. There is a weather station on site however while they can give you current conditions they can't provide you with a weather briefing. Other Princeton weather factors to be aware of are:

- You will need good weather for this trip. Cloud often packs up around Hope. Check the VFR Route Forecast on Nav Canada's page and the weather cams for Hope and Manning Park.
- Heat. It gets really hot at Princeton in the summer so be prepared for density altitude calculations.
- Wind. It can get very windy, particularly late in the afternoon.

Important Links & Contacts

Princeton Airport (great site!):

www.princetonairport.ca

Town of Princeton:

www.princeton.ca