



Civil Aviation Authority
SAFETY NOTICE
Number: SN-2014/006



Issued: 23 May 2014

Private and Aerial Work Helicopter Operations – Guidance On Aerodrome Operating Minima For IFR Departures

This Safety Notice contains information that is for guidance and/or awareness.

Recipients are asked to ensure that this Notice is copied to all members of their staff who may have an interest in the information (including any 'in-house' or contracted maintenance organisations and relevant outside contractors).

Applicability:	
Aerodromes:	Not primarily affected
Air Traffic:	Not primarily affected
Airspace:	Not primarily affected
Airworthiness:	Not primarily affected
Flight Operations:	All General Aviation Pilots
Licensed/Unlicensed Personnel:	Not primarily affected

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Any helicopter pilot landing or departing at an aerodrome needs to ensure that the site is suitable and that the prevailing weather conditions at the site are adequate to carry out all normal and emergency procedures. Whether a field site or a licensed facility, the aerodrome of departure will need to provide an environment where the flight can be commenced and safely continued into the en-route phase. In relation to this, the commander of the aircraft has certain legal and airmanship obligations to fulfil in relation to ensuring that the flight can be safely made whether day or night, under the Visual Flight Rules (VFR) or the Instrument Flight Rules (IFR).
- 1.2 In contrast to helicopter Public Transport operations, private and aerial work flights are allowed more operational flexibility including a greater possible choice of take-off and landing sites. With that flexibility, however, comes the potential for increased risk and a need to exercise high standards of airmanship, decision-making and hazard assessment. This is of particular importance when planning to depart IFR, in Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC) or at night, from a site where instrument procedures and aids are not available or established.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The purpose of this Safety Notice is to provide guidance on aerodrome operating minima and the aircraft commander's responsibilities for private helicopter flights departing IFR from aerodromes not equipped for instrument departures.

3 Definitions

- 3.1 In the context of this Safety Notice (Interpretation: article 255 of the Air Navigation Order 2009 (ANO)):

'Aerodrome':

- a) *means any area of land or water designed, equipped, set apart or commonly used for affording facilities for the landing and departure of aircraft; and*
- b) *includes any area or space, whether on the ground, on the roof of a building or elsewhere, which is designed, equipped or set apart for affording facilities for the landing and departure of aircraft capable of descending or climbing vertically; but*
- c) *does not include any area, the use of which for affording facilities for the landing and departure of aircraft has been abandoned and has not been resumed;*

'Aerodrome operating minima' (AOM) in relation to the operation of an aircraft at an aerodrome means the cloud ceiling and runway visual range for take-off, and the decision height or minimum descent height, runway visual range and visual reference for landing, which are the minimum for the operation of that aircraft at that aerodrome.

'Runway visual range' (RVR) in relation to a runway means the distance in the direction of take-off or landing over which the runway lights or surface markings may be seen from the touchdown zone as calculated by either human observation or instruments in:

- a) *the vicinity of the touchdown zone; or*
- b) *if this is not reasonably practicable, in the vicinity of the midpoint of the runway,*

and the distance, if any, communicated to the commander of an aircraft by or on behalf of the person in charge of the aerodrome as being the runway visual range must be taken to be the runway visual range for the time being;

4 Aerial Work and Private Aircraft – Aerodrome Operating Minima (AOM)

- 4.1 Article 87 of the ANO 2009 requires that: *the commander of a flying machine must, before take-off, take all reasonable steps so as to be satisfied that it is capable of safely taking off, reaching and maintaining a safe height and making a safe landing at the place of intended destination having regard to:*

- a) *the performance of the flying machine in the conditions to be expected on the intended flight; and*
- b) *any obstructions at the places of departure and intended destination and on the intended route.*