



**Civil Aviation Authority**  
**SAFETY NOTICE**  
**Number: SN-2014/010**



**Issued: 5 December 2014**

**Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA) – UK  
Implementation Update**

**This Safety Notice contains recommendations regarding operational safety.**

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

| <b>Applicability:</b>                 |                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Aerodromes:</b>                    | All Aerodrome Operators                                                  |
| <b>Air Traffic:</b>                   | All ATC                                                                  |
| <b>Airspace:</b>                      | All NATMAC Representatives                                               |
| <b>Airworthiness:</b>                 | Not primarily affected                                                   |
| <b>Flight Operations:</b>             | All AOC Holders, General Aviation Pilots and Unmanned Aircraft Operators |
| <b>Licensed/Unlicensed Personnel:</b> | All ATCOs, FISOs and Pilots                                              |

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 923/2012 (Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA)) entered into EU law on 4 December 2012. In October 2012 and pursuant to Article 11(2) of SERA, the United Kingdom notified the Commission of its intention not to apply the provisions of this Regulation until 4 December 2014. The Regulation therefore came into effect in the UK on 4 December 2014, following the expiry of the UK's national derogation.
- 1.2 SERA implements, in EU law, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Annex 2 (Rules of the Air) and parts of Annex 11 (Air Traffic Management) of the Chicago Convention. SERA will largely supersede the UK Rules of the Air Regulations 2007 (ROTA 2007) on that date, but see below.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Safety Notice is to advise the aviation community of the UK's implementation arrangements and how these have been devised to minimise the changes SERA could otherwise bring about.

## **2 Competent Authority**

- 2.1 The CAA will be designated as competent authority by an amendment to the Air Navigation Order (ANO) which comes into force on 10 December 2014. Until that date the CAA cannot issue any permissions or exemptions under SERA.

- 2.2 For the period between 4 December 2014 and 10 December 2014 the CAA has granted an **exemption** under article 14(4) of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Basic Regulation (Regulation (EC) No. 216/2008) (BR), allowing all flights currently permitted under rule 6 of ROTA 2007 to continue until 10 December 2014. The exemption also addresses Visual Flight Rules (VFR) and Special VFR at night and Visual Meteorological Conditions (VMC) below 3,000 feet in Class G airspace. **See Appendix A.**
- 2.3 On 10 December 2014 the CAA will replace the 14(4) exemption with a series of identically-worded general permissions for such flights, granted as competent authority for SERA in accordance with article 246 of the ANO 2009.

### 3 Impacts on the Rules of the Air

- 3.1 Most of the rules of the air in SERA are the same as in ROTA 2007. However, there are some differences:
- a) VFR by gliders and parachute aircraft in Class A airspace is not permitted under SERA, as it is under rule 18(3) (but see **paragraph 4.2**).
  - b) The VMC rules in Class C, D and E airspace below 3,000 ft are more restrictive than under ROTA 2007 (but see **paragraph 4.3**).
  - c) Special VFR flight in control zones requirements introduce clearance limitations applicable to Air Traffic Control (ATC) (but see **paragraph 4.4**).
  - d) The exemptions currently in rule 6 of ROTA 2007 against the prohibition from low flying are not contained in SERA but must be made as exemptions or permissions by the competent authority (see **paragraph 5.1**).
  - e) There is no quadrantal rule for Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) flight outside controlled airspace, all cruising levels are flown as semi-circulars (but see **paragraph 5.4**).
- 3.2 Article 8 of SERA permits Member States to retain additional provisions supplementing ICAO standards provided they do not constitute an ICAO difference. The CAA intends to make use of this article to retain certain rules under ROTA 2007 which therefore will continue to apply in the UK. These are the following rules:
- a) rule 5(3)(c) (1,000 feet rule) and rule 5(3)(f) (landing and taking off over open air assemblies);
  - b) rule 8(6) (avoiding aerial collisions);
  - c) rule 13 (order of landing);
  - d) rule 14 (landing and taking off);
  - e) rule 15 (aerobatic manoeuvres);
  - f) rule 19 (flight in class C airspace);
  - g) rule 22 (use of radio navigation aids);
  - h) rule 24A (test flying over congested areas);
  - i) rule 40 (movement of aircraft on aerodromes);
  - j) rule 41 (access for and movement of persons and vehicles on the aerodrome);
  - k) rule 42 (right of way on the ground);
  - l) rule 44(1) & (2) (launching and picking up of tow ropes etc.);
  - m) rule 45 (flight within aerodrome traffic zones);
  - n) rule 47(4) (display of lights by aircraft);

- o) rule 48(3) & (4) (failure of navigation lights);
- p) rule 51 (free balloons at night);
- q) rule 55 (airships by day);
- r) rule 56(1) (aerodrome signals and markings);
- s) rule 58(2), (3) & (4) (markings for paved runways and taxiways);
- t) rule 59 (markings on unpaved manoeuvring areas); and
- u) rule 60(4) (signals visible from the ground).

## 4 Exemptions and Derogations

### 4.1 Emergency Services

- 4.1.1 A series of general exemptions applicable to **Police**, **Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS)** and **Search and Rescue (SAR)** services have been granted, made initially between 4 and 10 December 2014 under BR article 14(4). Identically-worded exemptions, made in accordance with SERA article 4, will apply from 10 December 2014 until further notice. See **Appendix B**.

### 4.2 VFR by Gliders and Parachute Aircraft in Class A Airspace

- 4.2.1 Rule 18 of ROTA 2007 allows certain glider and parachute operations to fly VFR in Class A airspace subject to notification of arrangements with local ATC. The UK has applied to the European Commission (EC) for a derogation under BR article 14(6) to allow these operations to continue notwithstanding SERA.6001(a) and will grant a temporary, two-month exemption for such operations under BR article 14(4) whilst the derogation application is decided.

### 4.3 VMC in Class C, D and E Airspace

- 4.3.1 SERA.5001 requires VMC of 5 km flight visibility and 1,500 m horizontally and 300 m vertically away from cloud in Class C, D and E airspace. The UK has applied to the EC for derogation under BR article 14(6) to allow the continuation of the current VMC relaxations under rule 27(3) of ROTA 2007 for aircraft below 3,000' Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL). An exemption under BR article 14(4) will be granted against SERA.5001 for these flights whilst the derogation application is decided.

### 4.4 Special VFR in Control Zones

- 4.4.1 The UK is considering the need for a BR article 14(6) derogation from the conditions in SERA.5010(b)(2) provided reported VMC for aircraft transiting the control zone complies with SERA.5010(a)(2). The conditions described in SERA.5010(b) will preclude Special VFR crossings of control zones away from the affected aerodrome(s), despite conditions away from such aerodromes potentially exceeding SERA.5010(b). A BR article 14(4) exemption would be granted for two months against SERA.5010(b)(2) whilst the application is decided.

## 5 General Permissions

### 5.1 Low Flying Permissions

- 5.1.1 The low flying exemptions currently contained in rule 6 of ROTA 2007 were replaced as of 4 December 2014 by an **exemption** under BR article 14(4) (see **Appendix A**); this will be superseded verbatim on 10 December 2014 by a permission under SERA that reflects the CAA's designation to act as from that date as the competent authority. The temporary exemption has exactly the same effect as the permission but is required to bridge the gap between 4 December 2014 and 10 December 2014 until the designation takes effect.

## 5.2 VMC Visibility and Distance from Cloud Minima

- 5.2.1 The CAA will continue to permit flight visibilities reduced to not less than 1,500 m within Class G airspace for aircraft flying at or below 3,000 feet AMSL, and at speeds of 140 kt Indicated Airspeed (IAS) or less to give adequate opportunity to observe other traffic or any obstacles in time to avoid collision. This reflects ROTA 2007 rule 28(4) and (5).

## 5.3 VFR and Special VFR Flight at Night

- 5.3.1 The CAA will continue to permit flight in accordance with VFR at night, and Special VFR flight within a control zone at night in the United Kingdom. This supersedes general exemption ORS 4 No. 930, which expired on 4 December 2014.

## 5.4 Cruising Levels

- 5.4.1 SERA.5005(g) prescribes semi-circular cruising levels for VFR flights above 3,000 ft AMSL and SERA.5025(a) prescribes semi-circular cruising levels for IFR flights outside controlled airspace, appropriate to the magnetic track as specified in Appendix 3 of SERA, unless otherwise specified by the competent authority.
- 5.4.2 The CAA will permit VFR flights to be flown at a cruising level other than as appropriate to its magnetic track unless flying in conformity with the conditions specified by the appropriate ATC unit.
- 5.4.3 The CAA will permit IFR flights outside controlled airspace at or below 3,000 ft AMSL to be flown at a level other than on a cruising level appropriate to its magnetic track if it flies in accordance with instructions from the appropriate ATC unit or in accordance with holding procedures notified for an aerodrome.
- 5.4.4 For a period of two months from 4 December 2014 the CAA will exempt IFR traffic from the requirement to fly at a cruising level appropriate to its magnetic track, as specified at SERA Appendix 3. Instead, level cruising flight under IFR outside controlled airspace above 3,000 ft AMSL on a magnetic track appropriate to its magnetic track is permitted in accordance with quadrantal levels, i.e.

| Magnetic Track                                 | Cruising Level                       |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Less than 90 degrees                           | Odd thousands of feet                |
| At least 90 degrees but less than 180 degrees  | Odd thousands of feet plus 500 feet  |
| At least 180 degrees but less than 270 degrees | Even thousands of feet               |
| At least 270 degrees but less than 360 degrees | Even thousands of feet plus 500 feet |

- 5.4.5 This two-month period is required to ensure safe transition of ATC procedures to accommodate the change from quadrantal cruising levels to semi-circular cruising levels.

## 6 Individual Permissions and Exemptions

- 6.1 Arrangements regarding existing individual permissions and exemptions granted by the CAA under ROTA 2007 and, in respect of ROTA 2007, under article 242 of the ANO 2009 will be subject to a further general exemption pursuant to article 14(4) of the EASA BR, summarised below.