



Civil Aviation Authority
SAFETY NOTICE
Number: SN-2016/001



Issued: 01 April 2016

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 Business and General Aviation Operations
Licensed/Unlicensed Personnel:	All Business and General Aviation Helicopter Pilots, Instructors and Examiners

1 Introduction

1.1 Before flight, the pilot of a helicopter on a private or aerial work flight must be satisfied that the necessary planning has been completed and that:

- the flight can safely be made;
- the helicopter is in every way equipped and serviceable for the intended flight; and
- the helicopter is capable of safely taking off and reaching and maintaining a safe height, having regard to its performance in the conditions to be expected on the intended flight; and any obstructions in the vicinity of the place of departure.

In making this assessment, the pilot must take account of any conditions or restrictions in the helicopter's flight manual and that the prevailing weather conditions at the site are adequate to carry out all normal and emergency procedures.

1.2 In contrast to Commercial Air Transport (CAT) 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 commensurate standards of airmanship, decision-making and hazard assessment. This is of particular importance when planning to depart under the Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) in Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC), or at night, from a site where instrument procedures and aids are not available or established. Prior to use, Aerodrome Operating Minima (AOM) should be determined for each location from where a private or aerial work

aircraft is intended to be operated under IFR, using the recognised method of compliance (see paragraph 1.5).

- 1.3 Currently, the regulations governing private and aerial work flights are contained in the Air Navigation Order 2009 (ANO) but most of these operations will soon transition to the European Air Operations Regulation (**EASA Ops**) – Commission Regulation (EU) No. 965/2012. The regulation will apply in the UK from:
- 25 August 2016 for non-commercial complex motor-powered aircraft – Annex VI, Part-NCC
 - 25 August 2016 for other-than complex non-commercial aircraft – Annex VII, Part-NCO
 - 21 April 2017 for specialised operations (including aerial work) – Annex VIII, Part-SPO
- 1.4 The scope of the European rules is laid down in Regulation (EC) No. 218/2008 (the Basic Regulation (BR)) which includes, in Annex II, the descriptions of those aircraft types that will remain regulated by national legislation; the ANO for the UK. These include historic, research, amateur build and microlight type aircraft.
- 1.5 In the context of this Safety Notice, ANO Article 109 lays down the requirements for AOM, operating minima and the selection of alternate aerodromes. The article refers to the 'notified method' for calculating AOM which for these types of operations is contained in the **Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) AD 1.1** which is the 'recognised method of compliance'. The AIP directs operators to EASA Ops to establish their AOM using the information in that regulation and this might not be fully appreciated by all operators but will be the established method in the future under the European rules.
- 1.6 This Safety Notice supersedes SN-2014/006.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The purpose of this Safety Notice is to provide best practice and guidance on establishing AOM and highlighting the pilot in command's responsibilities for private helicopter flights departing under IFR from aerodromes not notified for instrument departures. It is mainly aimed at operations with helicopters capable of IFR flight, currently operating under the ANO, but which will come under EASA Ops in the near future.

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

- 3.1 ANO Article 255 (Interpretation) states:

'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.

Therefore, in the case of an aerodrome that does not have notified procedures, it is necessary for individual pilots in command to assess the safe AOM for each site, as they relate to their aircraft.

- 3.2 The Standardised European Rules of the Air (**SERA**) (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 923/2012) lays down at SERA.5001 and SERA.5005 the Visual Flight Rules (VFR) visibility minima for helicopters outside controlled airspace (CAS). This has been prescribed by the UK as 1,500 metres by day and 3,000 metres by night¹; departures in any lesser visibility are therefore by definition flights in IMC and are required to be flown under the IFR. Flights operating under IFR inside CAS are required by SERA.5020 to comply with Section 8 of SERA which details Air Traffic Control Service.

¹ The implementation of SERA Part C is expected to increase this from 3,000 m to 5 km from 18 August 2016.