



## **GUIDANCE FOR EVENT ORGANISERS AND HELICOPTER OPERATORS AT SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 Many Special Events attract the use of helicopters to provide a service for arriving and departing passengers (A - B Operations). Part of this service requires that the Event Organiser and/or helicopter operator ensure that the organisational set-up and provision of ground facilities are adequate to ensure the safety of flights and the safety of people on the ground. Whereas the helicopter operator's responsibilities are clearly established in law (and mentioned where relevant in this guidance), those of the Event Organiser and/or Heliport Manager are not (note that there could be an Event Organiser, Helicopter Operator(s) and a separate Heliport Manager in the equation). The person organising a Special Event is required to demonstrate that he has exercised sufficient duty of care concerning the arrangements for the overall safety of the members of the public at the event. When heliports and/or helicopter operations are part of the Event, the Event Organiser must ensure that he has exercised an adequate and specific duty of care in relation to these activities. Responsibility for the specific heliport/helicopter aspects of the Event may be allocated to people with the appropriate competencies. For example, when appointing a competent Heliport Manager part of his accountability should include:

- the Air Traffic Service (ATS);
- the Rescue and Fire Fighting Service (RFFS);
- ground handling and security staff;
- implementation of the emergency plan and liaison with local authority emergency services as required; and
- the layout and ground markings and general control of the heliport and associated procedures.

The Heliport Manager may delegate, for example, the ATS and RFFS to specialist, appropriately trained and certificated (and licensed for the ATS service), competent persons.

1.2 This guidance is written so that those involved with helicopters at Special Events will understand the considerations and processes necessary to address the practical safety issues arising once a decision is made to invite helicopters into or near to the event.

1.3 Pleasure Flying (A - A Operations/Local Flights) can be a feature at some Special Events and helicopter operators are reminded of their obligation to include a section in Operations Manuals to cover this specific activity (see [CAP 789 Requirements and Guidance Material for Operators](#), Annex 2 to Chapter 21).

## 2 Legal Responsibilities and Legal Issues

- 2.1 Helicopter Operators should be well aware of the regulations governing their operations. Organisers therefore must liaise closely with the selected operator(s) at an early stage to ensure that the proposals under consideration are acceptable. For major events it may be considered prudent to use the services of an aviation consultant who will be able to fulfil this liaison role and also address other technical issues such as the development of a Heliport Manual and establishment of an appropriate ATS, heliport design and layout and the setting up of approach and departure routes. For minor events involving only one helicopter operator, it should be sufficient to rely on the selected operator to provide the necessary co-ordination and provision of, or advice on, the ground and air service requirements. The philosophy of aviation law concerns itself with the safety of passengers and also the safety of people on the ground. Nowhere more than a major Special Event is the latter more relevant due to the likelihood of there being many people on the ground in the vicinity of the helicopter operating area. Although the responsibility under law for the safety of flights rests with the helicopter operator (through the helicopter Commander), the organiser of any Special Event carries a common duty of care to ensure that relevant safety issues have been addressed either by himself or by delegated competent persons.
- 2.2 Unless the heliport (the terms 'heliport' and 'aerodrome' have the same meaning throughout this document) is licensed, the rules relating to low flying and flying in the vicinity of a crowd are very relevant. These are rules which the helicopter operator is required to address and in general it will be necessary for the helicopter operator to seek permissions from the CAA in relation to the Rules of the Air Regulations 2007, specifically Rule 5(3)(c) - Low Flying over a congested area of a city, town or settlement, and Rules 5(3)(e) and 5(3)(f) - Flying in the vicinity of an assembly of more than 1,000 persons. It should be noted that, in relation to the latter, this requires the consent in writing of the organisers of the event. The procedures to be complied with can be found in the [UK AIP GEN 1-6 Landing and Taking Off Near Open Air Assemblies](#) (see [Appendix 1](#)).
- 2.3 There is no **legal** requirement to license a heliport unless it accepts helicopters on scheduled journeys for the purpose of the public transport of passengers or for certain, pilot licence-related training activity. It is accepted that 'shuttling' passengers at Special Events is not a 'scheduled' service. It is, however, prudent to consider whether to apply for a Temporary Aerodrome Licence for busy events, especially those involving a number of different helicopter operators.
- 2.4 Apart from the number of different operators, factors for consideration as to the advisability of licence application are:
- a) the total number of movements\* on the busiest day and the maximum rate of movements at the busiest times; and
  - b) the complexity of the surrounding airspace; and
  - c) from a) and b) above, a holistic interpretation of the need to apply for a temporary Air Traffic Zone (ATZ) or, for major events such as the British F1 Grand Prix, a need to request the establishment of Restricted Airspace (Temporary) (RA(T)).

\* a movement is a take-off **or** a landing.

The anticipated number of movements will provide an indication of the interest in the event and the number of spectators. This should provide useful information in estimating the complexity of the helicopter operation. The event organiser will also have an appreciation of the numbers and location of spectators in relation to the heliport location and approach and departure routes. These considerations should

predicate the level of RFFS and the level of ATS appropriate and should be addressed by helicopter operators as part of their legal responsibility, whether operating into licensed or unlicensed sites. For operations into unlicensed sites see [CAP 789 Requirements and Guidance Material for Operators](#), Annex 3 to Chapter 21, which describes appropriate levels of RFFS. If the heliport is licensed, the CAA will attach a schedule to the licence which will require certain levels of RFFS. These levels will be dependent on the size of helicopters in use.

2.5 Applications for a Temporary Aerodrome Licence should be made to:

Head of Aerodrome Standards  
Civil Aviation Authority  
Safety Regulation Group  
Aviation House  
Gatwick Airport South  
West Sussex  
RH6 0YR

An information pack regarding licence requirements and the application process is available from that Section. Applications should be submitted in sufficient time to allow for detailed consideration and inspection before the issue of a licence. The minimum notice required is 28 days from the date a complete Heliport Manual is received by Aerodrome Standards Department (ASD). Note also that the minimum notice required for ATZ and ATS licensing and radio frequency allocation is 90 days (see paragraphs 6.4 and 6.5). It should be obvious, therefore, that preparatory work and application procedures will have to be commenced well in advance of this deadline.

### 3 Other Rules

3.1 Other [Rules of the Air](#) against which permissions are not given, which the organiser should bear in mind and which operators are required to apply, concern the following:

- a) Rule 5(3)(a) which states “An aircraft\* shall not be flown below such height as would enable it to make an emergency landing without causing danger to persons or property on the surface in the event of a power unit failure”;
- b) Rule 5(3)(b) which states “an aircraft\* shall not be flown closer than 500 feet to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure”; and
- c) Rule 6(a) which states that Rule 5(3)(b) does not apply to an aircraft\* while it is landing or taking off in accordance with normal aviation practice; and that aircraft are not prohibited from flying in accordance with normal aviation practice, for the purpose of taking off from and landing at Licensed or Government aerodromes.

\* ‘aircraft’ includes helicopters as well as aeroplanes.

3.2 In summarising the above requirements and rules, it may be assumed that the relevance of the specific rules will be assessed by the CAA before a licence is issued. Consideration of such assessment may result in conditions being attached to the licence. If the heliport is not licensed, the effect of these Rules must be assessed by the helicopter operator, and this should obviously be done in consultation with the organiser.

### 4 Resolution of the Legal Issues

4.1 In the case of a licensed heliport the responsibility for ensuring that the heliport and the airspace within which its visual traffic pattern is normally contained are safe for use by helicopters is normally delegated to the Heliport Manager by the Licensee (Licensee

and Heliport Manager can be the same person). The Licensee must be a competent person, having regard to his previous conduct and experience. The Licensee must also satisfy the CAA that the heliport is safe for use by helicopters, having regard in particular to the physical characteristics of the heliport and of its surroundings; and that the Heliport Manual is adequate.

- 4.2 In the case of an unlicensed heliport, once the helicopter operator has obtained the landowner's or organiser's permission and any other permissions necessary from the CAA, the responsibility for the safe conduct of flights rests solely with the helicopter operator. There is some shared responsibility if night operations are to take place. In this case the 'site keeper' must ensure that adequate lighting is provided and maintained. It is quite acceptable, for unlicensed events, for a helicopter operator to appoint his own staff to act as Heliport Manager and as other heliport staff.

## **5 The Need for Co-ordination**

- 5.1 Generally speaking, a single small event involving a single operator will require a minimal level of co-ordination between the helicopter operator and the event organiser. A major event involving multiple operators will require a considerable amount of co-ordination between various agencies.

## **6 Co-ordination Issues**

- 6.1 In the case of a licensed heliport, and once application has been made to ASD, the issues concerning the physical characteristics will be overseen by ASD as part of the licensing process. However, before the process can be started, applicants will have to satisfy ASD that the declared distances have been properly measured, sufficient maps and diagrams have been produced and an acceptable management structure and Heliport Manual is in place. Other considerations which need to be addressed by the applicant concern the slopes on the manoeuvring areas; the distance between 'gates' (passenger drop-off and pick-up spots) and the size and slopes of any Touch-Down and Lift-Off Areas (TLOF); in the case of separate Final Approach and Take Off Areas (FATO, which is in fact a 'helicopter runway') - slopes and length(s) and width(s) of declared distances; passenger and crowd control and security; ATS procedures and RFFS levels and the associated emergency plan. These issues and others required by ASD must all be clearly documented. It is important, therefore, to address these issues and make licence application to ASD at the earliest opportunity. Applicants should refer to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Annex 14, Volume 2 (Heliports) and the ICAO Heliport Manual for definition of the distances and slopes against which ASD will base their assessment. Event organisers and helicopter operators are strongly urged to review the physical requirements described in these publications and carry out a site survey before any approach is made to ASD. ICAO publications are available from:

Airplan Flight Equipment  
1a Ringway Trading Estate  
Shadowmoss Road  
Manchester M22 5LH

[www.afeonline.com](http://www.afeonline.com)

- 6.2 In the case of an unlicensed heliport, the above issues will be initially addressed by the event organiser/helicopter operator. However, in this case these issues are also part of the helicopter operator's legal responsibility. He must satisfy himself that the site is suitable and that the specific type(s) of helicopter(s) can be safely operated in compliance with the helicopter operator's Operations Manual and the manufacturer's approved Flight Manual. In this context 'adequate' means that the dimensions of the

site and obstacles in the local area are such that the performance requirements for the specific type(s) will be met at the weights at which the helicopter(s) is planned to land and take off, and in the conditions which may reasonably be expected to exist at the time of operation. This responsibility remains the helicopter operator's at licensed sites where the available distances have been established in a licence. A licence issued for a heliport will not, therefore, mean that it is usable; only that the physical criteria and measured distances are documented and declared and that an appropriate management structure, systems, and equipment are in place (if they should not be in place on the day, the licence is invalid). The licence does not mean that the site will be suitable for all types in all conditions. It is therefore important, particularly in the unlicensed case, that the helicopter operator is consulted at the earliest stage of the planning process. It may be, for example, that the obstructions near a heliport or the proximity of the crowd will make the site suitable only for twin engine helicopters. A site survey should be carried out in relation to the specific type performance requirements contained in Flight and Operations Manuals at the earliest opportunity, and before any decision is made regarding site suitability. As far as the CAA is concerned, at an unlicensed heliport, the helicopter operator is solely legally responsible for all aspects of flight safety.

- 6.3 At an unlicensed site there is a shared responsibility between the helicopter operator and the event organiser when it comes to consideration of people on the ground generally, and specifically concerning those witnessing the event. A common duty of care is held by the event organiser to ensure that adequate safety measures are in place. This should address the aspects of crowd control, security, and separation of the crowd from the flying operations. The helicopter operator will need to ensure that passenger briefing facilities are adequate (specific briefings are required for each type), that safety briefings can be conducted in a quiet area and that sufficient adequately trained personnel are available for the ground handling of arriving and departing passengers.
- 6.4 An appropriate level of ATS should be provided. Assessment of the complexity of the operation will depend upon the number of movements and the number of operators participating. In general, the number of anticipated movements, and especially the maximum rate of movements at the busiest times, will predicate the level of ATS selected. Very low activity levels can be safely accomplished without any ATS provided that pilots and operators have briefed adequately on the agreed arrival, ground manoeuvring and departure procedures. A higher number of movements can be accommodated by an Air/Ground Communication Service (AGCS), which simply provides information while offering no 'control' of air traffic. Moving up the scale, an Aerodrome Flight Information Service (AFIS) provides a higher degree of service with the ability to issue instructions on the ground up to the holding point prior to take-off and once the aircraft has vacated the runway (or FATO) after landing. A full Air Traffic Control service (ATC) will provide full control at busy heliports, on the ground and in the air. In any case, even at small events, it is vital to ensure that approach and departure and circuit procedures are properly established and briefed to all participating pilots. Due consideration should also be made of the environmental effects concerning these routes and procedures on local populations. Applications for radio frequency allocations and approvals of radio equipment and radio operators should be made to the Air Traffic Standards Department at the CAA, Gatwick. Applications should be made at least 90 days in advance of the requirement. Persons providing AGCS, AFIS or ATC services must be appropriately certificated or licensed by the CAA.
- 6.5 For busy events, consideration needs to be given to the advisability of applying for the establishment of special airspace. A temporary ATZ can be established if the CAA is advised of, and agrees to, the need to impose a requirement on aircraft to contact the

ATS unit for permission to enter the airspace. With an ATZ, if an ATC service is being provided, a pilot has to request permission to enter. If an AGCS or AFIS service is provided a pilot has to obtain information from those units to enable the flight to be conducted safely. An ATZ, by definition, is the airspace extending from the surface to a height of 2,000 ft above the level of the aerodrome within the area bounded by a circle centred on the notified mid-point of the longest runway (FATO) and having a radius of two nautical miles. The British F1 Grand Prix and some major Motor Rally Events have been allocated an area of Restricted Airspace (Temporary)(RA(T)). This area can, in theory, be any appropriate size or shape and is designed to ensure that all aircraft, other than those participating, are excluded from the airspace and that those with permission to enter are fully controlled. Application for the establishment of an ATZ, and/or RA(T), should be made to:

Directorate of Airspace Policy  
CAA House  
45-59 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6TE

Applications should be made at least 90 days in advance of the requirement.

- 6.6 RFFS requirements will be attached to all temporary licences and are a condition of the licence. The helicopter operator is responsible for ensuring an appropriate level of RFFS at unlicensed sites. Reference should be made to [CAP 789 Requirements and Guidance Material for Operators](#), Annex 3 to Chapter 21. The local emergency services (police, fire and ambulance) should be advised of the helicopter activity in good time and should feature in the heliport emergency orders.
- 6.7 Local Planning Regulations are not the responsibility of the CAA although they may be an important consideration for the event organiser. Event organisers are advised to contact their Local Planning Authority for guidance.

## **7 Major Events**

- 7.1 Some events will necessitate the establishment of temporary 'Feeder Sites' in order to feed the event location. The guidance provided above will apply to such Feeder Sites and each site should be addressed as a separate heliport when considering specific heliport operations. There will naturally need to be a higher level of co-ordination between the agencies, the event site and the participating operators and Feeder Site managers so that the event can be considered as an integrated operation. Helicopter operators are required to advise Flight Operations Inspectorate (Helicopters) (FOI(H)) at least 28 days prior to the event if they intend to use a site as a Feeder Site, and at least 7 days in advance of the intention to use any site for Pleasure Flying. Use of the standard notification form is required (see [Appendix 2](#)). See paragraph 15 for a list of annual, major special events. Helicopter operators are required to submit a special advice proforma for the nomination of feeder sites for the British F1 Grand Prix (see [Appendix 3](#)).

## **8 Weather**

- 8.1 There is no obligation or requirement on a heliport manager, whether licensed or not, to set heliport operating minima other than that specified by the ANO or the procedures in AIP GEN 1-6, or to make a decision to close in conditions of reduced visibility or cloud base. There is an obligation, however, for the heliport manager to consider the effects of weather on the state of the manoeuvring surfaces. All or some areas of the heliport should be closed if the surface becomes unsuitable or cannot support safe landings or rejected take-offs or support the RFFS vehicle. A careful watch on the

condition of the ground should be maintained in wet weather. A small area of unsuitability could mean that the required distances are no longer available and helicopter operators must be informed accordingly so that they can recalculate performance requirements as necessary. Initial selection of the site should consider the land drainage aspects and the propensity for flooding in the event of rain. Helicopter operators can only operate in weather minima which are set in their Operations Manuals and to ground conditions which should be set in Operations Manuals and/or in Flight Manuals. Due to the large numbers of helicopters operating under Visual Flight Rules in a very small area, some events such as the British F1 Grand Prix include a higher than normal operating minima for all sites and for all en-route participating aircraft. These arrangements are published ahead of each event in an Aeronautical Information Circular (AIC) and an Information Notice.

## **9 Refuelling**

- 9.1 If refuelling operations are to be considered, the event organiser should ensure that any provisions which he makes are acceptable to the helicopter operator who must conduct all refuelling operations in accordance with the provisions of his Operations Manual. It is considered to be unacceptable to conduct rotors-running refuelling operations with passengers embarked. Guidance on refuelling operations can be found in [CAP 748 Aircraft Fuelling and Fuel Installation Management](#).

## **10 Airside Safety Management**

- 10.1 Heliport Managers are recommended to study the contents of [CAP 642 Airside Safety Management](#). This document is written to provide guidance on safe operating practices for all those engaged in activities taking place on the airside areas of aerodromes.

## **11 Public Access**

- 11.1 The heliport should be clearly defined and protected from unauthorised or inadvertent entry by members of the general public. It may be necessary to use barriers or fencing and warning notices to define the boundaries of the heliport operating area, any clearway beyond it, and parking areas. Arrangements should be made with local police as to how security is to be effected. Regular patrols by heliport officials, supported by police if necessary, should be allowed for to ensure onlookers are not endangered by the heliport activities and to be alert to the possibility of acts of terrorism, vandalism or pilfering.

## **12 UK Helicopter Industry Involvement**

- 12.1 The British Helicopter Association (BHA), the UK helicopter industry body, undertakes a major co-ordination role for the known and annually planned special events in the UK. BHA holds annual pre-season planning and post-season meetings for special events. Special pre-meetings and wash-up meetings regarding major events such as the British F1 Grand Prix are also held. Organisers of special events where helicopters are employed should contact the BHA, not only for advice and guidance, but also to ensure that the helicopter community is aware of proposals and plans. The BHA have many years of experience in helicopter issues at Special Events and are in a good position to offer specific guidance, available at [www.britishhelicopterassociation.org](http://www.britishhelicopterassociation.org). The CAA maintains a close working relationship with the BHA on helicopter matters.

### **13 Foreign Participation**

- 13.1 Requirements for the participation of non-UK registered helicopters have been drawn up by the Department for Transport. A foreign operator will have to agree to operate to equivalent safety standards as UK operators and will be required to attend any briefing and follow any procedures in the same way as UK operators. Foreign operators should apply for Permissions to:

Department for Transport  
International Aviation & Safety Division  
Zone 1/27-1/29  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Applications should be made at an early stage in the planning cycle. Permit application forms and permit application procedures are available at [www.dft.gov.uk/aviationpermits](http://www.dft.gov.uk/aviationpermits).

### **14 Promulgation of the Helicopter Activity at the Event**

- 14.1 The Air Information Service (AIS) holds the responsibility for publication of Notices to Airmen (NOTAM) in disseminating information relating to aerial activity. NOTAMs are 'sponsored' by ASD if the event-associated heliport is licensed. For unlicensed heliports, AIS may require a sponsor from within the CAA. In this case, Event Organisers/Heliport Managers or helicopter operators should discuss the advisability of raising a NOTAM and the NOTAM format with FOI(H) at the CAA, Gatwick.

### **15 UK Special Events Calendar**

- 15.1 Major UK Special Events where temporary heliports are planned in the UK are:

Cheltenham (Gold Cup)	March
Aintree (Grand National)	April
Epsom (The Derby)	June
Ascot (Royal Ascot)	June
Henley (Regatta)	June/July
Silverstone (British F1 Grand Prix)	July
British Open Golf	July
Cowes (Cowes Week etc.)	July/August
Goodwood (Glorious Goodwood)	July/August
Welsh Rally	September (2012)

## APPENDIX 1

GEN 1-6 - 7

19 Nov 09

### UK AIP

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#### 1. Landing and Taking Off Near Open Air Assemblies

1.1. When an event involving an organised open-air assembly of more than 1000 people takes place within 1000 metres of an unlicensed aerodrome or helicopter landing site, compliance with the following procedures is required under Rule 5(3)(f) of the United Kingdom Rules of the Air 2007 (as amended).

##### 1.2. Procedures applicable at a pre-existing unlicensed aerodrome:

- a. Landing and take-off shall only be performed with the permission of the person in charge of the aerodrome;
- b. Aircraft shall not fly over any area occupied by spectators or car parks below a height of 1000 ft agl or such height as will permit the aircraft, in the event of a power unit failure, to alight clear of the assembly, whichever is the higher;
- c. The person in charge of the aerodrome shall ensure that on the ground, aircraft and members of the public are segregated from each other.

##### 1.3. Procedures applicable at a temporary helicopter landing site:

- a. The helicopter commander or operator shall obtain the written permission of the person in charge of the event prior to using the landing site;
- b. The person in charge of the event should convey to helicopter commanders written details pertaining to the location and layout of the landing site and the procedures to be employed;
- c. The person in charge of the event should inform the local police authority a minimum of 24 hours in advance of the commencement of operations;
- d. The person in charge of the event shall ensure that on the ground, aircraft and members of the public are segregated from each other;
- e. Landing and take-off shall only be performed:
  - i. During daylight hours;
  - ii. When the cloud ceiling is higher than 600 ft agl and the flight visibility is more than 3 km.
- f. Helicopters shall not fly over any area occupied by spectators or car parks below a height of 1000 ft agl or such height as will permit the helicopter, in the event of a power unit failure, to alight clear of the assembly, whichever is the higher.
- g. Landing and take-off shall be made in an area which has been set aside for the purpose and helicopters which are landing and taking-off shall maintain a safe distance from persons located outside the area, of at least 30 metres.
- h. Approach and departure shall be made over clear areas so that a safe forced landing can be achieved in the event of engine failure.

##### 1.4. Procedures applicable to aeroplane operations at a temporary aerodrome:

- a. Operations should be conducted in accordance with the guidance contained in CAP 428;
- b. The aircraft commander or operator shall obtain the written permission of the person in charge of the event prior to using the aerodrome;
- c. The person in charge of the event should convey to aircraft commanders written details pertaining to the location and layout of the aerodrome and the procedures to be employed.
- d. Aircraft shall not fly over any area occupied by spectators or car parks below a height of 1000 ft agl or such height as will permit the aircraft, in the event of a power unit failure, to alight clear of the assembly, whichever is the higher.

1.5. CAP 428 contains guidance on safety standards at unlicensed aerodromes and CAP 768 contains guidance to operators who hold AOCs (both available at [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk)). Further advice concerning operations at unlicensed aerodromes (for non-public transport operations) may be obtained from the Flight Operations Inspectorate (General Aviation) of the Civil Aviation Authority, Tel: 01293-573525. Further advice concerning operations at heliports or landing sites (for helicopter public transport operations) may be obtained from the Flight Operations Inspectorate (Helicopters) of the Civil Aviation Authority, Tel: 01293-573443.



**APPENDIX 3**

**BRITISH F1 GRAND PRIX - NOTIFICATION OF FEEDER SITE SELECTION**

NAME/OS GRID & SITE TELEPHONE NUMBER	A/C TYPES	CONFIRM DIMENSIONS AGAINST A/C PERF WITH OPS MANUAL REFERENCE	TOTAL NO. OF MOVMENTS (ANTICIPATED)				LEVEL OF ATS	RFF SERVICE PROVIDER (NAME) & LEVELS OF PRIMARY & COMPLIMENTARY MEDIA	OPS MANUAL ANNEX (FSI or CREW NOTICE) REFERENCE	ROUTES DESCRIPTION	NAME OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR SITE MANAGEMENT
			Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun					

Date ..... Signed ..... Company ..... Position Held .....