



New VHF Low Level Common Frequency Trial - 'Hear More, See More'

Military crews will already be aware of UHF Low Level Safety Frequency, as a 'hear and avoid' strategy to be used at suitable and safe opportunities when flying in the UK Low Flying System. It aims to build Situational Awareness (SA) of those other military aircrew operating nearby as a tool to help reduce the risk of Mid-Air Collision. However, it is important to remember that there are also a large number of civilian users in the low flying system, who are limited to just VHF communication. With an increasing trend of Airprox between military and civilian users in the Low Flying System, a trial has been initiated for a VHF Low-Level (LL) Common frequency to be used across all mainland Britain so that civilian operators can be better integrated and help build SA for all users. In 2015, a similar trial was carried out in Scotland, which proved to be very successful.

The trial: 'VHF LL Common' is being introduced, from 1 Jun 21 to 1 Jun 22, as an information service on the VHF Frequency 130.490 in order to improve

the SA amongst, and to aid deconfliction between, aircraft operating in the same area. It is available for use by all aircrew, military and civilian, operating at or below 2000' Above Ground Level in the UK Low Flying System. To remove any confusion and to minimise workload, the UHF frequency is not to be used for the duration of the trial. Aircrew should apply their airmanship when considering the timing and content of their transmissions. Guidance for the use of the VHF LL Common frequency is offered overleaf and follows the same guidance in the UK Low Flying Handbook:

Timing:

- When safe and suitable to do so
- When entering/exiting the Low Flying System
- Crossing LFA boundaries
- At turning points or significant heading changes
- Approaching well-known and recognisable physical features
- Any time it is considered beneficial to the safety of the aircraft

Content:

- Aircraft callsign
- Aircraft type (and number, in the case of formations)
- Position in relation to reference points immediately identifiable to other pilots (using cardinal or inter-cardinal directions)
- Height
- Heading
- Next significant reference point

Example transmissions:

"Vortex, Chinook, 8 miles North East of Inverness, 250 feet, heading south towards Aviemore"

"Python formation, 2 Hawks, 5 miles SE Kendal, 250 feet, heading East, towards Ripon"

TRIAL
VHF Low Level
Common Frequency:
130.490
1 Jun 21 – 1 Jun 22
(Mainland Britain Only)

Everybody should be aware of the risk of Mid-Air Collision, and the constant aim to reduce that risk. The RAF Safety Centre is at the forefront of this campaign. In 2015, a VHF low level common frequency north of Latitude N56-00° was trialled, which is now successfully utilised by operators flying at low level in that area. Building on this success, the CAA and the RAF Safety Centre have agreed that a VHF frequency should be trialled across the mainland Britain as the new 'low level common'. We see more and more civilian vs military and civilian vs civilian Airprox in the low flying system and this is the rationale for a VHF frequency that can be used by all users. To avoid confusion, it is vital that both military and civilian users are clear on how it should be used, when to use it and the importance of **accuracy**, **brevity** and **clarity** when using it.

The overall aim is to avoid mid-air collisions. This 'VHF LL Common' is another tool to achieve this - it is not a silver bullet, nor should it be considered as such. Whilst it is not mandatory, if you possess a spare VHF radio and you are not talking to anybody else, if you are in an area where you might get uncomfortably close to another aircraft, and if you are not already talking to a LARS provider, it makes sense to announce yourself to anybody who might be listening.

To help gauge its success, the Safety Centre needs some feedback from you. Please submit Defence Air Safety Occurrence Reports (DASORs) using '**VHF LL Common**' in the brief title, commenting on your experience of the LL Common VHF Frequency – either positive or negative. Or you can send any feedback / questions direct to the RAF Safety Centre point of contact for the trial:

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Notes:

- The UHF frequency is **not** to be used.
- Using this frequency should not take priority over obtaining a Lower Airspace Radar Service (LARS).
- It is not a chat frequency.
- Transmissions should be:
 - Accurate
 - Clear
 - Concise
- If nothing heard, do not assume there are no aircraft nearby. Use all measures available to avoid Mid-Air Collision, and always maintain an effective lookout scan.

More Information



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Write to the Editor:

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