



Miscellaneous

No: 1610

[Air Navigation Order 2016](#)

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UK SERA and the Rules of the Air
Regulations 2015

General Permission and Exemption E 6213

Balloon Pilots – Congested Area Take-Off, Becalmed Landing & Open-Air Assembly

Background

- 1) This general permission and exemption replaces the previous permission and exemption published as Official Record Series 4 No.1555 and applies to balloon pilots who hold either a UK Commercial Pilot’s Licence (Balloons), a UK Private Pilot’s Licence (Balloons and Airships) or a Part-BFCL Balloon Pilot Licence. It covers congested area take-offs, landings and overflights, becalmed landings and take-offs or landings near an open-air assembly in hot-air balloons.

Interpretation

- 2) In this permission and exemption,
 - a) the “Order” means the Air Navigation Order 2016 (as amended),
 - b) the “CAA” means the Civil Aviation Authority.

Permission and Exemption

- 3) The CAA, pursuant to SERA.3105 and SERA.5005(f) of the Annex to Assimilated Regulation (EU) No. 923/2012, hereby permits, subject to the conditions specified in paragraph 5) below:
 - a) any hot-air balloon (the ‘balloon’) to take-off or land within, and to fly over, a congested area of a city, town or settlement below a height of 1,000 feet above the highest fixed obstacle within a horizontal radius of 600 metres of the aircraft;
 - b) the balloon to take off or land within 1,000 metres of an organised open-air assembly of more than 1,000 persons.
- 4) The CAA, pursuant to Article 266 of the Order, hereby exempts the balloon operator and pilot-in-command from Rule 5(1)(b) and Rule 5(2)(b) of the Rules of the Air Regulations 2015 subject to the conditions specified in paragraph 5) below.
- 5) Except in the event that the balloon is landing within a congested area because the balloon is becalmed, this permission and exemption is granted subject to the following conditions.
 - a) The balloon is:
 - i) taking off from within or adjacent to a congested area;

- ii) taking off or landing within 1,000 metres of an organised open-air assembly of more than 1,000 persons.
 - b) The pilot in command of the balloon must be the holder of either:
 - i) a valid UK Commercial Pilot's Licence (Balloons) with experience which includes at least three ascents in a balloon from a congested area site under supervision from another pilot-in-command of that balloon, as detailed in sub-paragraph c); or
 - ii) valid UK Private Pilot's Licence (Balloons and Airships) or a valid Part-BFCL Balloon Pilot Licence with a minimum total flying experience in command of balloons exceeding 35 hours which includes three ascents from a congested area site under supervision from another pilot-in-command of that balloon, as detailed in sub-paragraph c).
 - c) The pilot in command supervising those ascents must:
 - i) be the holder of a valid UK Commercial Pilot's Licence (Balloon), a valid UK Private Pilot's Licence (Balloons and Airships), or a valid Part-BFCL Balloon Pilot Licence;
 - ii) have a minimum total flying experience in command of balloons of not less than 75 hours and which includes six ascents from a congested area site; and
 - iii) be approved by either the Civil Aviation Authority or by the British Balloon and Airship Club.
 - d) Flights must only take place with the prior permission in writing of the owner of the take-off site and, when applicable, the organiser of the assembly.
 - e) Before any flight:
 - i) the operator of the balloon must notify the local police authority of the intended flights; and
 - ii) the pilot in command of the balloon must reasonably satisfy themselves that the height of any fixed object within the sector 45 degrees each side of a line vertically below the intended flight path does not exceed 30% of the horizontal distance between the fixed object and the point of take-off.
 - f) The balloon must not be flown during take-off or landing within 60 metres of any vessel, vehicle or structure except the balloon recovery vehicle(s).
 - g) The flight must only be made by day and in weather conditions which will enable the balloon to remain clear of cloud, in sight of the surface, with a visibility of at least 3 kilometres and which will ensure that the landing will be clear of any congested area, except in the case of the balloon becoming becalmed.
 - h) Following a take-off this permission and exemption applies only to the first 5 minutes of any flight during the climb immediately after take-off and within 1.5 kilometres of the launch site. Thereafter the balloon must not be flown over any congested area of a city, town or settlement below 1,000 feet above the highest fixed obstacle within a horizontal radius of 600 metres of the balloon.
- 6) This permission and exemption supersedes Official Record Series 4 No. 1555, which is revoked.

Date in Force

- 7) This permission and exemption has effect from the date it is signed until 20 September 2026, both dates inclusive, unless previously varied, suspended or revoked.

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for the Civil Aviation Authority

13 September 2024

Explanatory Note:

As defined in Schedule 1 of the Air Navigation Order 2016, a congested area in relation to a city, town or settlement means any area which is substantially used for residential, industrial, commercial or recreational purposes.