



Issuing VFR and SVFR Air Traffic Control Clearances to Helicopter Operations Conducted by Police, Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) and Search and Rescue (SAR) Operators

1. The Department for Enterprise ('the Department'), pursuant to Article 4 of Schedule 2 to the Civil Aviation (Rules of the Air) Order 2021¹ ('SERA'), exempts the operator and pilot in command conducting any Emergency Services Helicopter flights, including any training flights associated with these activities, and the associated Air Traffic Control Units (ATCUs) from complying with SERA.5005(b) subject to the conditions specified in paragraph 2.
2. The conditions specified in paragraph 1 are that, for VFR flights by Emergency Services Helicopters, including any associated training flights, taking off or landing at an aerodrome within a control zone or entering the aerodrome traffic zone or aerodrome traffic circuit:
 - (a) the flights must be conducted in accordance with procedures detailed in the Operator's Operations Manuals;
 - (b) helicopter operators conducting SAR training flights must do so in accordance with a Letter of Agreement with the appropriate Air Traffic Service Provider; and
 - (c) ATCUs must issue clearances for any such flights in accordance with procedures detailed in UK CAA Publication CAP 493, The Manual of Air Traffic Services (MATS) Part 1.
3. The Department permits, under SERA.5010, Emergency Services Helicopters to be operated under, and for ATCUs to issue, a special VFR clearance other than in accordance with SERA.5010(b) and (c) subject to the conditions specified in paragraph 4.
4. The conditions specified in paragraph 3 are that:
 - (a) the flights must be conducted in accordance with procedures detailed in the Operator's Operations Manuals;
 - (b) ATCUs must issue clearances for any such flights in accordance with procedures detailed in UK CAA Publication CAP 493, The Manual of Air Traffic Services (MATS) Part 1.
5. In this General Exemption and Permission, 'Emergency Services Helicopter' means any helicopter for the time being operated under an Air Operator Certificate or Police Air Operator Certificate granted by the UK CAA; for Search and Rescue operations on behalf of the UK Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA); for Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) under a SPA.HEMS approval; or in the service of an Isle of Man or UK police authority.
6. This General Exemption and Permission has effect from **01 August 2021** until it is revoked.

Signed:

Date: 1 August 2021

¹ SD No. 2021/0184

Explanatory note

1. This General Exemption and Permission does not alleviate the pilot(s) in command of their responsibility to comply with the VMC criteria prescribed in SERA.5001 when operating in accordance with VFR inside controlled airspace.
2. Helicopter pilots operating Police, HEMS or SAR including any associated training flights will do so in accordance with their Operations Manual which prescribes visibility and distance minima for their operations. Air Traffic Control Officers are not required to know these prescribed minima.
3. This General Exemption and Permission supports the following provisions within CAP 493, the Manual of Air Traffic Services Part 1:
 - (a) Section 1, Chapter 2, Paragraphs 8B.1 and 8B.2,
 - (b) Section 2, Chapter 1, Paragraphs 6A.1 and 6A.2; and
 - (c) Section 3, Chapter 1, Paragraphs 8.5 and 8.6.