

Issuing VFR and SVFR Air Traffic Control Clearances to Helicopter Operations Conducted in Support of the Maintenance of the National Infrastructure

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 of a helicopter conducting pipeline, powerline or rail track inspection flights in support of the maintenance of the national infrastructure 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 conducted by a helicopter for the purposes of pipeline, powerline or rail track inspection flights and undertaken in support of the maintenance of the national infrastructure and when 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; and
 - (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.
3. The Department permits, under SERA.5010, helicopter flights for the purposes of pipeline, powerline or rail track inspections in support of the maintenance of the national infrastructure to be conducted under, and 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; and
 - (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. This General Exemption and Permission has effect from **01 August 2021** until it is revoked.

Signed:

Date: 1 August 2021



Colin Gill
Deputy Director of Civil Aviation
Isle of Man Civil Aviation Administration
Ground Floor, Viscount House
Isle of Man Airport, IM9 2AS

Explanatory note

¹ SD No. 2021/0184

1. Pipeline, powerline or rail track inspection flights in support of the maintenance of the national infrastructure are for the purposes of SERA Article 4(1)(c) deemed to be environmental control missions conducted by, or on behalf of public authorities. See GM1 SERA.5010 Special VFR in control zones.
2. 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.
3. Pilots of helicopters conducting pipeline, powerline or rail track inspection flights in support of the maintenance of the national infrastructure and operating in accordance with special VFR 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.
4. Pilots using callsigns that do not convey the type of national infrastructure activity they are engaged should ensure that the nature of activity is conveyed when requesting an air traffic control clearance.
5. Pipeline, powerline or rail track inspection flights in support of the maintenance of the national infrastructure and conducted in controlled airspace are Non-Standard Flights (NSFs) and should be notified as such in accordance with UK Aeronautical Information Publication ENR 1.1 section 4.1.
6. 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.