

6 November 2014

Policy Statement

NON-STANDARD AND ENHANCED NON-STANDARD FLIGHT APPROVALS IN THE UK FLIGHT INFORMATION REGIONS

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Unusual Aerial Activities (UAAs) wholly contained within controlled airspace are processed under either Non-Standard Flight (NSF) or Enhanced Non-Standard Flight (ENSF) procedures and are subject to prior approval by either the CAA or specific ATS providers.
- 1.2 UAAs are events such as air exercises, trials, aerial surveys, flying displays, formation, balloon or kite flights that could adversely affect the normal operation of other airspace users and may constitute a hazard to pilots who are not aware of the activity. The CAA requires appropriate prior notification of such activities to enable timely co-ordination and notification and to ensure that any necessary Permissions or Exemptions under the Air Navigation Order (ANO) and the Rules of the Air Regulations can be granted in good time.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 **'Air traffic control clearance'** means authorisation for an aircraft to proceed under conditions specified by an air traffic control unit.
- 2.2 **'Approval'** means agreement in principle for a proposed action, subject to the conditions of an air traffic control clearance.
- 2.3 **'Controlled airspace'** is an airspace of defined dimensions within which air traffic control service is provided in accordance with the airspace classification, namely ICAO airspace classes A-E.
- 2.4 **'Enhanced Non-Standard Flight'** (ENSF) is aerial task required to operate within Restricted Areas EG R157, EG R158 and EG R159.
- 2.5 **'Non-Standard Flight'** (NSF) in Controlled Airspace is an aerial task that may not necessarily follow published routes or notified procedures; a formation flight of civil aircraft other than for VFR transit of CTA/CTR/TMA; or flights to and from a temporary landing site for multiple short term operations.
- 2.6 **'Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA)'** means any unmanned aircraft, other than a balloon or a kite, having a mass of not more than 20 kg without its fuel but including any articles or equipment installed in or attached to the aircraft at the commencement of its flight.
- 2.7 **'Unusual Aerial Activity'** is any event such as an air exercise, trial, display, formation, balloon or kite flight which could adversely affect the normal operation of other airspace users.

3 Policy

- 3.1 Non-Standard Flights (NSFs) and/or Enhanced Non-Standard Flights (ENSFs) are subject to the prior-approval process detailed below.
- 3.2 With the exception of operations within the Northolt Radar Manoeuvring Area as described at UK AIP AD 2-EGWU AD 2.17 and the Denham and Brooklands Local Flying Areas as described at UK AIP AD 2-EGLL AD 2.22, NSF or ENSF permissions will not be granted to single-engine aeroplanes requesting to operate within those parts of the London and London City Control Zones between a North-South line extending through the LON VOR (512914N 0002800W) and a North-South line extending through the LCY NDB (513015.66N 0000403.01E). This is due to the inability of such aircraft to comply with Rule 5(d) (Low Flying) of the Rules of the Air Regulations 2007.
- 3.3 Flights within controlled airspace by Small Unmanned Aircraft which have a mass of more than 7 kg, are considered as Unusual Aerial Activities and are required to be notified to the relevant Air Traffic Control unit using the NSF process. NSF approval is given conditional upon the SUA operation remaining entirely within the limits of the stated lateral and vertical operating area and that no safety assurance against other Unusual Aerial Activities taking place in the same area is given or implied. Compliance with Articles 137, 166 and 167 of the Air Navigation Order is required at all times.
- 3.4 Flights by Small Unmanned Aircraft of any mass into Restricted Areas EG R157, R158 and R159 within the London and London City Control Zones require specific approval via the ENSF process.

4 Applications for NSF and/or ENSF Approval/Status

- 4.1 Applications for, or renewals of, NSF status within Controlled Airspace are to be submitted via the NATS Non-Standard Flight Application website (www.nats.co.uk/nsf) no less than 21 days in advance of the planned task(s).
- 4.2 Applications for ENSF status within Controlled Airspace are to be made via the NATS Non-Standard Flight Application website (www.nats.co.uk/nsf) no less than 28 days in advance of the planned task(s).
- 4.3 Exceptionally, applications may be submitted to the air traffic service units specified at UK AIP ENR 1.1 Section 4.1.
- 4.4 ENSF approvals are subject to security considerations by the Metropolitan Police and may be refused on public interest grounds.
- 4.5 Applications for the approval of NSFs operating both within and outside Controlled Airspace and Class G airspace are to be submitted to the CAA's Airspace Regulation Section (formerly DAP's Airspace Utilisation Section) in accordance with the requirements specified at UK AIP ENR 1.1 Section 4.1.

5 Content

- 5.1 Applications for NSFs and/or ENSFs within Controlled Airspace are to contain details of:
- a. The purpose of the subject flight.
 - b. The area of operation and proposed tracks to be flown, to include graphical depiction on a suitable aeronautical chart plus a list of National Ordnance Survey Grid and/or WGS84 co-ordinates detailing the requested areas of operation in relation to Controlled Airspace.
 - c. Estimated duration of aerial task.
 - d. Operating levels.
 - e. Aircraft type(s), callsign and registration letters on any aircraft likely to be used.
 - f. Aerodrome of departure.
 - g. Planned date of operation and requested validity period.
 - h. Communications equipment (including transponder fit).

6 NSF/ENSF Approval and ATC Clearance Requirements

- 6.1 Approved NSF and ENSF requests will be allocated an NSF reference number. This does not absolve aircraft operators from their obligation to obtain an ATC clearance to operate in accordance with the NSF/ENSF approval. ATC clearance to operate in accordance with the approval must be obtained from the appropriate ATC Watch Supervisor on the day(s) of the activity, normally by telephone no later than 1 hour prior to departure. Watch Supervisors have the authority to refuse or apply conditions and restrictions to any such requests.
- 6.2 Obtaining pre-flight clearance for, or in-flight amendment or cancellation of, NSF/ENSF tasks is to be undertaken in accordance with procedures specified at UK AIP ENR 1.1 Section 4.
- 6.3 NSF/ENSF approval does not imply exemption from the requirements of the Air Navigation Order (ANO) or Rules of the Air Regulations. Applications for flights which require exemption from, or written permission under, the ANO or Rules of the Air are to be submitted to the CAA.

7 NSF/ENSF Amendments and Cancellations

- 7.1 Amendments to previously approved NSF applications that do not require changes to validity dates are to be submitted to the appropriate unit no less than 10 days prior to the effective date of the proposed amendment.
- 7.2 Cancellations of NSF/ENSF approvals are to be notified to the appropriate unit as soon as practicable.

8 Enquiries

- 8.1 Enquiries concerning NSF policy issues may be addressed to the CAA at ats.enquiries@caa.co.uk.