



Miscellaneous

No: 1604

[UK Regulation \(EU\) No. 923/2012](#)

Publication date: 19 June 2024

General Exemption E 6176

UK Standardised European Rules of the Air – Issuing VFR and SVFR Air Traffic Control Clearances to Helicopter Operations Conducted in Support of the Maintenance of the National Infrastructure

Background

- 1) National Infrastructure Helicopter flights may be required to operate in accordance with VFR or special VFR when the meteorological conditions specified within SERA.5005(b) and SERA.5010(c) prevent air traffic control (ATC) units from issuing the corresponding clearance. The purpose of this exemption is to permit specific aircraft operators and their pilots to operate in accordance with procedures and VFR and special VFR limits specified within their aircraft operator's operation manual, and to permit ATC units to issue VFR and special VFR clearances accordingly.

Interpretation

- 2) In this exemption:
 - a) "(UK) SERA" means the Annex to UK Regulation (EU) No 923/2012 the '(UK) Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA)', and references to SERA followed by a number mean the corresponding provision within the (UK) SERA.
 - b) In this Exemption and Permission, a "National Infrastructure Helicopter" means any helicopter operated for the purpose of conducting pipeline, powerline or rail track inspection flights in support of the maintenance of the national infrastructure and which are deemed to be environmental control missions conducted by, or on behalf of public authorities.

Exemption

- 3) The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), pursuant to Article 4(1)(c) of UK Regulation (EU) No 923/2012, exempts the operator and pilot in command of a National Infrastructure Helicopter and the ATC units providing a VFR clearance to such a helicopter under this exemption, from complying with SERA.5005(b) subject to the conditions specified in paragraph 4.
- 4) The conditions are that, for VFR flights conducted by a National Infrastructure Helicopter and when taking off from 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 and limitations detailed in Operator's Operations Manuals; and,

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- b. ATC units must issue clearances for any such flights in accordance with procedures detailed in Civil Aviation Publication (CAP) 493, The Manual of Air Traffic Services (MATS) Part 1.
- 5) Subject to the condition specified in paragraph 6, the CAA permits, under SERA.5010, ATC units to provide a special VFR clearance to a National Infrastructure Helicopter operating under this exemption without complying with SERA.5010(c).
- 6) The condition is that ATC units must issue any clearance for such flights in accordance with procedures detailed in Civil Aviation Publication (CAP) 493, The Manual of Air Traffic Services (MATS) Part 1.
- 7) This exemption supersedes Official Record Series 4 No.1577, which is revoked.

Date in Force

- 8) This exemption and permission have effect from 19 June 2024 and remain in force until they are revoked.

R C Daniel
for the Civil Aviation Authority

18 June 2024

Explanatory notes:

1. For the purposes of UK Regulation (EU) No 923/2012 Article 4(1)(c), National Infrastructure Helicopter flights are deemed to be environmental control missions conducted by, or on behalf of public authorities.
2. This general exemption 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 National Infrastructure Helicopter flights 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 controllers are not required to know these prescribed minima.
4. Pilots using callsigns that do not convey the type of national infrastructure activity that they are engaged in should ensure that the nature of the activity is conveyed when requesting an ATC clearance.
5. National Infrastructure Helicopter flights 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 supports the following provisions within CAP 493, the Manual of Air Traffic Services Part 1:
 - (i) Section 1, Chapter 2, Paragraphs 8B.1 and 8B.2,
 - (ii) Section 2, Chapter 1, Paragraphs 6A.1 and 6A.2; and,
 - (iii) Section 3, Chapter 1, Paragraphs 8.5 and 8.6.