



Civil Aviation Authority
SAFETY NOTICE
Number: SN-2024/006



Issued: 29 August 2024

Right-of-Way and Avoidance of Collisions

This Safety Notice contains recommendations regarding operational safety.

Recipients must ensure that this Notice is copied to all members of their staff who need to take appropriate action or who may have an interest in the information (including any 'in-house' or contracted maintenance organisations and relevant outside contractors).

Applicability:	
Aerodromes:	Not primarily affected
Air Traffic:	All ATS
Airspace:	Not primarily affected
Airworthiness:	Not primarily affected
Flight Operations:	All Aeroplane and Helicopter AOC Holders. All General Aviation Pilots
Licensed/Unlicensed Personnel:	All ATCO, student ATCO and FISO. All pilots

1 Introduction

- 1.1 A recent AIRPROX event has highlighted a need to provide additional guidance to civil pilots regarding formations of military aircraft, rights-of-way and the avoidance of collisions.

2 Right-of-way and Collision Avoidance

- 2.1 The AIRPROX event highlighted a difference between the right-of-way requirements for military aircraft published by the UK Military Aviation Authority (MAA) and those for civil aircraft within the Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA). The MAA provision describes how formations of military aircraft are normally less manoeuvrable than a single aircraft, and indicates that a formation has right-of-way over a single military aircraft, irrespective of the relative geometry of the aircraft. This differs from the civil right-of-way requirements, which give no priority to formations, and applies the same requirements to both formations and single aircraft.
- 2.2 The MAA has issued guidance to their regulated community on this matter, advising leaders of formations of military aircraft that civil aircraft will comply with the right-of-way requirements detailed within SERA.3210(c); essentially, that a formation does not have an 'automatic' right-of-way over single civil aircraft. In practise, this means that, on identifying an airborne conflict, the priority for military pilots in the formation will be to manoeuvre their aircraft in such a way as will best avert collision.

- 2.3 Good airmanship and the need to consider and manage ‘unanticipated threats’ mean that pilots must always be aware of the risk of airborne conflict – even if they have the right-of-way – and the overriding need to:
- (a) take such action as will best avert collision (SERA.3201); and,
 - (b) not operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard (SERA.3205).

As such, civil pilots are advised to exercise good airmanship and to take timely action whenever they consider it appropriate to avoid collisions, especially bearing in mind that aircraft in a ‘close’ formation may be less manoeuvrable than a single aircraft.

- 2.4 Pilots are reminded that a dedicated VHF channel, the Low Level Common (LLC) frequency, has been established to support situational awareness for operations in class G airspace within the UK Low Flying System (UKLFS). Using the LLC frequency may benefit awareness of potential conflicts with military formations in the UKLFS and assist pilots in taking early action to avoid the risk of collision. Details of the UK LLC Frequency are provided in UK AIP GEN 3.4 paragraph 3.2.5.

3 Queries

- 3.1 Any queries or requests for further guidance as a result of this Safety Notice should be submitted via email to ATS.Enquiries@caa.co.uk and marked for the attention of Airspace & ATM Policy.

4 Cancellation

- 4.1 This Safety Notice will remain in force until further notice.