



Civil Aviation Authority

SAFETY NOTICE

Number: SN-2024/006



Version 2 Issued: 12 September 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.
- 2.5 Details of the UK LLC Frequency are provided in UK AIP GEN 3.4 paragraph 3.2.5 which, for the readers’ convenience, is reproduced within the annex to this Safety Notice.

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.

Annex

Note. The text below is reproduced from UK AIP GEN 3.4 paragraph 3.2.5, and was correct on 12 September 2024.

3.2.5 VHF Low Level Common Frequency for use within the UK Low Flying System (UKLFS)

- a. Available for use by all aircrew, military and civilian, operating in Class G airspace at or below 2000 FT AGL in the UKLFS and should be monitored whenever possible.
- b. Pilots should use this channel to broadcast their intentions to help improve situational awareness between all aircrew operating in the same area.
- c. The channel assigned is 130.490 MHz and shall be known as the “LL-Common Frequency”.
- d. The conditions of use are:
 - i. Pilots should make use of the LL Common Frequency only when not in receipt of a Lower Airspace Radar Service or other Air Traffic Service, or when operating outside an area where a Frequency Monitoring Code and associated ATC frequency/channel is used.
 - ii. Pilots should make blind calls. To prevent clutter the channel must not be used as a chat channel.
 - iii. Transmissions should be accurate, clear and concise.
- e. Transmission Timing:
 - i. When safe and suitable.
 - ii. When entering/exiting the UKLFS.
 - iii. At turning points or significant heading changes.
 - iv. Approaching well-known and recognisable physical features.
 - v. Any time it is considered beneficial to the safety of the aircraft.
- f. Blind call Content:
 - i. Call Sign.
 - ii. Aircraft type (and number, in case of formations).
 - iii. Position in relation to reference points immediately identifiable to other pilots (using cardinal or inter-cardinal directions).
 - iv. Altitude.
 - v. Heading.
 - vi. Next significant reference point.
- g. Details of the UKLFS are shown in ENR 6-20 and ENR 6-21.

Note: Whilst civil aircraft will broadcast their Altitude above sea level based on QNH, military aircraft in the UKLFS will be operating on Radar Altimeter heights and broadcasting their height Above Ground Level. Civil operators should consider their actual height above ground when assessing any potential conflict with military traffic.