UK Civil Aviation Authority

Guidance for Determining the Need for Air Traffic Services Provision

CAP3300

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Introduction

1.1 This document provides guidance to aerodrome operators to support them in ensuring that the provision of air navigation services at an aerodrome is appropriate to the level of traffic and the operating conditions at the aerodrome[1]. This guidance focusses specifically on the aerodrome operator's considerations when determining the need for the provision of air traffic services (ATS) and the appropriate level of service provision.

1.2 This document addresses the UK's adoption of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Annex 11[2] Standards and supports an aerodrome operator's compliance with applicable regulatory requirements by providing acceptable means of compliance (AMC) and guidance material (GM) to:

- UK Reg (EU) No 139/2014 Annex III Part-ADR.OR ADR.OR.C.005(b)(1);
- Licensing of Aerodromes (CAP 168) Chapter 1, 1.25; and
- Air Navigation Order (ANO) 2016 Article (Art.) 209(1).

1.3 The GM is of equal benefit to:

(a) operators of unlicensed aerodromes that fall outside the scope of ANO 2016 Art. 209(1) and who may find the information useful to inform their management of the aerodrome.

(b) commercial air transport operators in ensuring that air traffic services appropriate to the airspace are used[3] and that only aerodromes that are adequate for the type(s) of aircraft and operation(s) are used[4]; and

[1] The terminology here is taken from UK ADR.OR.C.005(b)(1). ANO 2016 Art. 209(1) and CAP 168 Chapter 1, 1.25 both refer to an aerodrome having 'adequate facilities', which includes in its meaning 'air navigation services'.

[2] Annex 11 *Air Traffic Services Fifteenth Edition*, including up to Amendment 54 dated 27 November 2025, Chapter 2, 2.4.

[3] CAT.OP.MPA.100 contained in Annex IV Part-CAT to UK Reg (EU) No 965/2012 refers.

[4] CAT.OP.MPA.105 and CAT.OP.MPA.107 contained in Annex IV Part-CAT to UK Reg (EU) No 965/2012 refer.

(c) pilots-in-command when considering whether an aerodrome has adequate facilities for the safe conducts of flights for the purpose of flying instruction or testing[5].

Document purpose

1.4 The purpose of this document is to:

(a) Provide policy and guidance on the requirement to ensure that the provision of ATS (as one of the air navigation services) is appropriate to the level of traffic and the operating conditions at the aerodrome;

(b) Provide a set of determinant factors to inform the aerodrome operator's determination of the need for the provision of ATS and assist them in determining the level of ATS required;

(c) Highlight relevant regulation and GM for those aerodromes that are licensed or certified and provide equivalent information to assist unlicensed aerodromes.

1.5 This document should be read in conjunction with the CAA's 'Progressive Airspace Design: Guidance for Airspace Around UK Aerodromes (CAP 3281)'. It describes the principle that the selection of an appropriate airspace structure and, where applicable, its airspace classification, follows a determination of the need for, and level of, ATS at an aerodrome.

Definitions

1.6 In addition to the terms defined within CAP 1430, for the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply:

(a) 'aeronautical radio station' means a radio station on the surface, which transmits or receives signals for the purpose of assisting aircraft. ANO 2016 Schedule 1.

(b) 'aeronautical station' means a land station in the aeronautical mobile service. In certain instances, an aeronautical station may be located, for example, on board ship or on a platform at sea. UK Reg (EU) 923/2012 Article 2(15).

(c) 'aerodrome' is defined as any area (including buildings, installations and equipment) on land, water, or on a fixed offshore or floating structure intended to be used either wholly or partly for the arrival, departure and surface movement of aircraft. UK Reg (EU) 923/2012 Art 2(6).

[5] ANO 2016 Article 209(2).

(d) ‘aerodrome flight information service’ means a flight information service for aerodrome traffic provided by a designated air traffic services provider. UK Reg (EU) 2017/373 Annex I (6).

(e) ‘air-ground communications service (AGCS)’ means an informal facility at an aerodrome where ATS are not provided, and which is used by aerodrome traffic to broadcast their intentions and the exchange of relevant information with an aeronautical radio station operator on aerodrome conditions and other activities at the aerodrome. CAA.

Note: AGCS does not constitute an air traffic service.

(f) ‘air navigation services’ means air traffic services; communication, navigation and surveillance services; meteorological services for air navigation; and aeronautical information services (UK Reg (EC) No 549/2004).

(g) ‘airspace restriction’ means a defined volume of airspace within which, variously, activities dangerous to the flight of aircraft may be conducted at specified times (a ‘danger area’); or such airspace situated above the land areas or territorial waters of a State, within which the flight of aircraft is restricted in accordance with certain specified conditions (a ‘restricted area’); or airspace situated above the land areas or territorial waters of a State, within which the flight of aircraft is prohibited (a ‘prohibited area’). EUROCONTROL ERNIP Part 3 – Procedures for Airspace Management.

(h) ‘air traffic service (ATS)’ means a generic term meaning variously, flight information service, alerting service, air traffic advisory service, air traffic control service (area control service, approach control service or aerodrome control service). UK Reg (EU) 923/2012 Article 2(32).

(i) ‘air traffic services unit’ (ATSU)’ means a generic term meaning variously, air traffic control unit, flight information centre, aerodrome flight information service unit or air traffic services reporting office. UK Reg (EU) 923/2012 Article 2(35).

(j) ‘air traffic services (ATS) airspaces’ means airspace of defined dimensions, alphabetically designated, within which specific types of flights may operate and for which air traffic services and rules of operation are specified. UK Reg (EU) 923/2012 Article 2(33).

(k) ‘air traffic control (ATC) service’ means a service provided for the purpose of preventing collisions between aircraft, and on the manoeuvring area between aircraft and obstructions; and expediting and maintaining an orderly flow of traffic. UK Reg (EU) 923/2012 Article 2(30).

(l) ‘alerting service’ means a service provided to notify appropriate organisations regarding aircraft in need of search and rescue aid, and assist such organisations as required.

(m) ‘approved training organisation (ATO)’ means an organisation which is entitled to provide training to pilots on the basis of an approval issued in accordance with the first subparagraph of Article 10a(1) UK Reg (EU) 1178/2011 Article 2(16).

(n) ‘apron’ means a defined area intended to accommodate aircraft for purposes of loading or unloading passengers, mail or cargo, fuelling, parking or maintenance. UK Reg (EU) 923/2012 Article 2(42).

(o) ‘control area (CTA)’ means a controlled airspace extending upwards from a specified limit above the earth. UK Reg (EU) 923/2012 Article 2(56).

(p) ‘controlled airspace (CAS)’ means an airspace of defined dimensions within which air traffic control service is provided in accordance with the airspace classification. UK Reg (EU) 923/2012 Article 2(58).

(q) Note: controlled airspace is a generic term which covers ATS airspace Classes A, B, C, D and E. UK Reg (EU) 923/2012 Article 2(58) GM1.

(r) ‘control zone (CTR)’ means a controlled airspace extending upwards from the surface of the earth to a specified upper limit. UK Reg (EU) No 923/2012 Article 2(61).

(s) ‘flight Information Service (FIS)’ is a service provided for the purpose of giving advice and information useful for the safe and efficient conduct of flights. UK Reg (EU) 923/2012 Article 2(77).

(t) Note: Within UK airspace, the UK FIS, as detailed in CAP 774, are the only ATS provided within Class G airspace. Within the UK, the scope of FIS, as defined in ICAO Annex 11 and transposed into EU iaw the Regulations (EU) 923/2012, is met through the application of any of the UK FIS.

(u) ‘landing area’ means that part of a movement area intended for the landing or take-off of aircraft. UK Reg (EU) No 923/2013 Article 2(92).

(v) ‘SAFETYCOM’ is a common VHF channel (135.480) made available for use at certain aerodromes where no other frequency is allocated, to enable pilots to broadcast their intentions to other aircraft that may be operating on, or in the vicinity of, the aerodrome. CAA.

(w) Note: SAFETYCOM is not an ATS. Procedures for its use by pilots are notified in UK AIP GEN 3.4.

(x) ‘non-ATS function’ means a generic term meaning variously air-ground communications service (AGCS) or SAFETYCOM (CAA).

Background

1.7 ICAO Annex 11[Error! Bookmark not defined.] places a requirement upon Contracting States to determine 'those portions of airspace and those aerodromes where ATS will be provided'. ICAO's Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) is the global strategy for the continuous improvement of aviation safety. It promotes the effective implementation of State Safety Programmes and requires States to address their significant safety concerns. In the UK, controlled flight into terrain (CFIT) and mid-air collision (MAC) have been identified among these concerns, with the provision of ATS cited as a mitigation for both.

1.8 The management of UK airspace, particularly in areas characterised by high-density and complex air traffic, presents distinct challenges. Increasing traffic complexity, and the need for greater airspace efficiency all require appropriate levels of ATS to maintain safety – mitigating the risks of MAC and CFIT – while enhancing capacity, efficiency, and achieving the integration of new users. Consequently, the consideration of the need for ATS provision and the appropriate level of service is essential to balance operational flexibility with safety and is thus a key component of the UK's Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS).

1.9 However, in the UK, the nature of how ATS are provided in class G (uncontrolled) airspace is complex and nuanced. Whilst UK SERA.6001[6] specifies that an air traffic control (ATC) service is only provided in controlled airspace, some aerodromes in class G airspace have ATC units that provide ATS to aerodrome traffic. The management of flights within the aerodrome traffic zone at such aerodromes involves the use of procedures and phraseology associated with an ATC service. This can lead to different interpretations about the level and type of service being provided and create complexity for aerodrome operators in determining the need for the provision of ATS.

1.10 This GM navigates this complexity, clearly describing the options open to aerodrome operators and is written within the context of the services formally defined in UK SERA. It provides guidance to aerodrome operators to support their decisions on whether ATS should be provided, and at what level, as one aspect of achieving the desired level of safety performance at their aerodrome. In conjunction with relevant regulatory requirements, this GM outlines a framework for assessing that need. In doing so, it supports safe operations by ensuring that services provided at aerodromes remain fit-for-purpose; it improves compliance with the UK's international obligations; and, where applicable, it improves the quality and availability of data for risk-based oversight by the CAA.

[6] Detailed in the Annex to UK Reg (EU) No 923/2012 Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA).

CHAPTER 2

Regulatory Framework

2.1 In the UK an 'aerodrome' means a defined area (including buildings, installations and equipment) on land, water, or on a fixed offshore or floating structure intended to be used either wholly or partly for the arrival, departure and surface movement of aircraft.[7]

2.2 This definition means that all areas used by aircraft, from basic farm strips to large commercial airports are considered aerodromes and are therefore covered by this guidance.

2.3 For ease of reference, the provisions that aerodrome operators must comply with and to which this guidance relates are cited below.

- For certified aerodromes, UK Reg (EU) No 139/2014 Annex III Part-ADR.OR:

ADR.OR.C.005 Aerodrome operator responsibilities

[…]

(b) The aerodrome operator shall ensure directly, or coordinated through arrangements as required with the accountable entities providing the following services:

(1) the provision of air navigation services appropriate to the level of traffic and the operating conditions at the aerodrome;

[…]

- For licensed aerodromes, 'Licensing of Aerodromes' (CAP 168) Chapter 1, 1.25:

[…]

General requirements for the grant of a licence

1.25 Before a licence is granted the CAA will require to be satisfied that the physical conditions on the manoeuvring area, apron and in the environs of the aerodrome are acceptable, and that the scale of equipment and facilities provided are adequate for the flying activities which are expected to take place. The criteria which will be applied in making this assessment are given in the chapters which follow.

[…]

- For aerodromes that are neither licensed nor certified and are used for purposes of flying instruction and testing, ANO 2016 Art. 209(1) and (3):

Aerodromes – use for purposes of flying instruction and testing

[7] UK Reg (EU) No. 923/2012 Art 2(6)

209.—(1) The operator of an aerodrome which is neither a national licensed aerodrome nor a certified aerodrome must not permit an aircraft flying or intended to fly for a purpose specified in paragraph (3) to take off from or land at the aerodrome unless satisfied on reasonable grounds that the aerodrome has adequate facilities for the safe conduct of such flights.

[…]

(3) A flight is for a purpose specified in this paragraph if it is for the purpose of—

(a) instruction in flying given to any person for the purpose of becoming qualified for the grant of a pilot's licence or the inclusion of an aircraft rating, a night rating or a night qualification in a licence; or

(b) carrying out flying examinations for the grant of a pilot's licence or the inclusion of an aircraft rating, a night rating or a night qualification in a licence.

This includes evidence that the provision and level of air navigation services (including the provision of ATS) have been considered in line with the aerodrome SMS process and is appropriate for the level of operations expected.

Aerodromes conducting such activities should therefore make an informed decision on whether ATS is required to meet this standard.

2.4 For ease of reference, the provisions that aircraft operators must comply with and to which this guidance relates are cited below.

- For commercial air transport operations, UK Reg (EU) No 965/2012 Annex IV Part-CAT:

CAT.OP.MPA.105 Use of aerodromes and operating sites

(a) The operator shall only use aerodromes and operating sites that are adequate for the type(s) of aircraft and operation(s) concerned.

[…]

CAT.OP.MPA.107 Adequate aerodrome

The operator shall consider an aerodrome as adequate if, at the expected time of use, the aerodrome is available and equipped with necessary ancillary services such as air traffic services (ATS), sufficient lighting, communications, weather reporting, navigation aids and emergency services.

- For pilots in command of aircraft operated at aerodromes that are neither licensed nor certified and which are used for purposes of flying instruction and testing:

- ANO 2016 Art. 209(1), (2) and (3):

  Aerodromes – use for purposes of flying instruction and testing

  209.—(1) The operator of an aerodrome which is neither a national licensed aerodrome nor a certified aerodrome must not permit an aircraft flying or intended to fly for a purpose specified in paragraph (3) to take off from or land at the aerodrome unless satisfied on reasonable grounds that the aerodrome has adequate facilities for the safe conduct of such flights.

  (2) The pilot in command of an aircraft must not take off from or land at an aerodrome which is neither a national licensed aerodrome nor a certified aerodrome on a flight for a purpose specified in paragraph (3) unless satisfied on reasonable grounds that the aerodrome has adequate facilities for the safe conduct of such flights.

  (3) A flight is for a purpose specified in this paragraph if it is for the purpose of—

  (a) instruction in flying given to any person for the purpose of becoming qualified for the grant of a pilot's licence or the inclusion of an aircraft rating, a night rating or a night qualification in a licence; or

  (b) carrying out flying examinations for the grant of a pilot's licence or the inclusion of an aircraft rating, a night rating or a night qualification in a licence.

2.5 It is therefore important that aerodrome operators appropriately assess and select their provision of ATS (or other function) and make this information available, enabling aircraft operators to determine whether an aerodrome meets their operational needs.

2.6 While the above relates to certified or licensed aerodromes, the factors to be considered and processes described in this document to determine the need for ATS can also be used by aerodrome operators at unlicensed aerodromes.

CHAPTER 3

Determination of ATS Need

3.1 Whether an aerodrome is a farm strip, a helicopter landing site or a hard runway equipped airfield, the physical characteristics and operating standards in place should provide a safe operational environment. In all cases, decisions regarding the provision and level of ATS should be risk-based. Both the assessment process and its outcomes should be documented within the aerodrome's safety management documentation and made available to prospective users through the provision of an aerodrome manual. Further guidance on safety management documentation and aerodrome manuals is provided later in this document.

3.2 The objectives of the ATS, the types of ATS available and the airspace classifications in which they're provided are defined within SERA.7001 and SERA.6001[8] respectively. Further information on each type of ATS can be found at Annex B.

3.3 Determining the need for the provision of ATS requires aerodrome operators to consider a range of quantitative and qualitative factors. Where relevant, the aerodrome operator should seek support from the air navigation service provider (ANSP) to inform their decision making. The decision-making process is therefore inherently complex and requires informed judgement by suitably qualified subject matter experts and consideration of the following:

(a) **Types of air traffic involved**. A mix of aircraft types with different performance characteristics (e.g. speed) can complicate traffic management and may necessitate ATS. Conversely, high traffic density involving uniform aircraft types may be manageable without the same level of service;

(b) **Density and complexity of air traffic**. Lower traffic densities may only require FIS to provide information for the safe and efficient conduct of flight whilst high density environments may require the introduction of ATS. This threshold will vary depending on the nature of operations; for example, recreational aviation may present different risk tolerances compared to scheduled commercial air transport, particularly that involving passengers;

(c) **Airspace complexity:** The structure and classification of surrounding airspace, including nearby special-use airspace, may necessitate ATS to reduce the risk of MAC through the provision of traffic information.

[8] Contained within the Annex to UK Reg (EU) No 923/2012

(d) **Aerodrome layout:** Multiple landing areas and taxiways can increase manoeuvring area complexity and may require ATS (particularly ATC). Conversely, a limited number of runway entry/exit points can also increase complexity, especially when combined with higher traffic density.

(e) **Meteorological conditions:** Weather may significantly affect operations in areas with continuous traffic flow (e.g. scheduled services), while having less impact in environments where operations can cease under adverse conditions (e.g. local VFR activity).

(f) **Geographical and environmental factors:** proximity to maritime environments, large bodies of water, mountainous terrain, or elevation relative to mean sea level may influence local meteorological phenomena. These factors may increase the perceived risk of MAC or CFIT, potentially necessitating ATS provision.

(g) **Remoteness:** Operations over large bodies of water, mountainous regions or uninhabited areas may justify ATS provision, even at low traffic levels, to ensure the availability of an alerting service.

(h) **Topography:** The presence of high ground may require ATS to mitigate CFIT risk.

(i) **Available technology and infrastructure:** The equipment and systems available at an aerodrome may influence the level and type of service that can be provided.

3.4 In conducting their assessment, aerodrome operators should consider the factors outlined above (further detail is provided in Annex A), along with any others they consider to be relevant to their specific operational context. The factors considered by the aerodrome operator, their analysis and the resulting decision on the need for ATS provision should then be clearly documented. Where ATS is deemed necessary, aerodrome operators must also determine the appropriate level of service. The types of ATS[9] available are defined by UK Reg (EU) No 923/2012.

3.5 Where the aerodrome operator determines that no requirement exists for ATS provision at an aerodrome, a non-ATS function may be considered sufficient to achieve the desired level of safety performance. Alternatives include:

a. **Air-Ground Communications Service (AGCS)** is an informal facility at an aerodrome where ATS are not provided, and which is used by aerodrome traffic to broadcast their intentions and the exchange of relevant information with an aeronautical radio station operator on aerodrome conditions and other activities at the aerodrome. (CAA).

[9] Further information on each type of service can be found at Annex B.

b. **SAFETYCOM** is a common VHF frequency (135.480) made available for use at certain aerodromes where no other frequency is allocated, to enable pilots to broadcast their intentions to other aircraft that may be operating on, or in the vicinity of, the aerodrome.

These non-ATS functions do not constitute an ATS and cannot be represented as such.

CHAPTER 4

Safety Management Systems

4.1 An SMS is a systematic and proactive approach to managing safety. It allows operators to identify causal factors that could lead to an accident or incident at their aerodrome and to act before such an event occurs. An SMS enables an understanding of hazards and risks affecting aerodrome operations, including their potential impact in terms of cost and/or reputation.

4.2 All aerodromes, whether licensed, certified or unlicensed, should have an effective SMS that identifies hazards and risks associated with operations, assesses and prioritises them, and ensures that appropriate mitigation measures are put in place to reduce risks to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP) [10]. The size and complexity of the SMS should be proportionate to the size and complexity of the aerodrome and its operations.

4.3 In its simplest form, an SMS is a document that details hazards associated with the aerodrome and its operations. For example, at a farm strip, this could include the presence of livestock near the landing area or areas of uneven ground. At larger aerodromes there is likely to be a greater number of hazards present reflecting the increased complexity of the operation.

4.4 To meet the requirements of Reg (EU) 139/2014 – Certified Aerodromes

GM2 ADR.OR.C.005 (c) Aerodrome operator responsibilities

Aerodrome operators should record their analysis and rationale for a determination on the appropriate level of air traffic services provision within their safety management system. Where appropriate, hazards should be identified and, where necessary, risks should be mitigated.

4.5 Details of the type of provision determined appropriate (whether ATS or non-ATS) should be made available to aerodrome users through the aerodrome manual and, where appropriate, published in AIP AD 2.18.

4.6 CAP 168 -General Requirements for the grant of a licence, requires that:

1.26 The CAA will require to be satisfied that the applicant for the licence is able to ensure an effective safety management system and, in those

[10] A risk may be described as ALARP if you have taken all reasonable action to mitigate the risk and the cost (in terms of time, effort and money) of taking further action would be ‘grossly disproportionate’ to any further reduction in the level of risk. (CAP 1059)

activities which are related to the safe operation of the aerodrome, to provide staff who are competent and where necessary, suitably qualified.

4.7 CAP 795, Safety Management Systems, provides SMS guidance for organisations including ANSPs and aerodromes. As aerodromes vary in size and complexity, organisations should develop their SMS to suit the size, nature and complexity of their operations, as well as their relevant hazards and associated risks. For small, non-complex organisations, additional guidance is available in CAP 1059, Safety Management Systems: Guidance for small, non-complex organisations.

4.8 At the core of an SMS is a formal risk management process that identifies hazards and assesses and mitigates risk. Whether for a large, complex or a small local airfield with few users, decisions regarding the provision of ATS (or alternatives), or the decision that none is required, are likely to affect the safe operation of the aerodrome. These decisions should therefore be considered part of the SMS and recorded in the aerodrome manual.

4.9 A hazard identification process is the formal means of collecting, recording, analysing and acting on hazards that affect aerodrome safety. Hazards may be identified through various methods, including brainstorming, internal or external safety assessments of audits, and safety information from external sources (e.g. similar aerodromes).

4.10 For aerodromes subject to UK Reg (EU) No. 139/2014, GM1 ADR.OR.D.005(b)(3) Management system Management system provides more details on hazard identification. While directed at certified aerodromes, this guidance may also be useful for those aerodromes not subject to certification.

4.11 Once hazards have been identified, a risk assessment should be conducted to determine the level of risk associated with them in terms of potential harm. Risks should be assessed based on both the likelihood[11] and severity[12].

4.12 Aerodromes with well-developed SMS frameworks may already use established methods (such as the Bow-Tie method) to assess risks, and these can be applied to the factors identified in paragraph 3.3. For simpler operations, a basic risk assessment matrix or table may be sufficient, supported by a narrative explaining which factors are relevant and the processes and procedures in place to mitigate identified risks.

4.13 What is essential is that aerodrome operators make informed decisions based on their knowledge and understanding of their operations and environment, and that these decisions are properly recorded. This is important both for audit purposes (where applicable) and to enable users to understand any risks associated with

[11] Likelihood – what is the likelihood of the risk happening?

[12] Severity – if the risk occurs how bad will it be?

operating at the aerodrome. A simple way of recording the information is in the production of an aerodrome manual.

CHAPTER 5

Aerodrome Manual

5.1 As with an SMS, the format and contents of an aerodrome manual will vary depending on the size and complexity of the aerodrome. For many small aerodromes, the manual can be simple and brief, provided it covers the procedures and information essential for satisfactory day-to-day operations.

5.2 At a simple farm strip, the ‘manual’ may consist of a single sheet of paper providing details such as location, orientation and runway surface. It may also include information on operational limitations (e.g. permitted days/times of use) and hazards, such as the likelihood of livestock straying onto the airfield.

5.3 At the other end of the scale, larger aerodromes are more likely to require detailed documentation. The size and complexity of operations may mean that the manual is significantly larger or divided into multiple documents covering different aspects of the operation (e.g. procedures, safety information, etc.).

5.4 An aerodrome manual should contain basic information such as the location of the airfield and the arrangements in place for access or use (e.g., whether prior permission required (PPR) applies). It should also include details of available facilities, including the provision of ATS.

5.5 Other facilities may include fuel availability and type, the level of firefighting and rescue services, and amenities such as a café. The manual should also specify any limitations or restrictions on who may use the airfield and provide relevant contact details.

5.6 As noted in CAP 168, an aerodrome manual should not only satisfy CAA requirements but also serve as a means of promulgating all procedures and information relating to the safe management of the aerodrome. It should provide the reader with a clear and unambiguous explanation of how safety is developed, managed, and maintained on the aerodrome[13].

5.7 For certified aerodromes subject to UK Reg (EU) No 139/2014, the requirements for an aerodrome manual are detailed in Subpart E – Aerodrome Manual and Documentation (ADR.OR.E.005 Aerodrome Manual):

[13] CAP 168, Chapter 2, para 2.22, page 53.

Subpart E – AERODROME MANUAL AND DOCUMENTATION (ADR.OR.E)

ADR.OR.E.005 Aerodrome manual

[…]

(l) The content of the aerodrome manual shall be as follows:

[…]

(5) Particulars of the operating procedures of the aerodrome, its equipment and safety measures.

AMC2 ADR.OR.E005 Aerodrome manual

AERODROME MANUAL

[…]

E. PART E – PARTICULARS OF OPERATING PROCEDURES OF THE AERODROME, ITS EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY MEASURES

[…]

30. Details of the air traffic service provided, including:

30.1 Type of air traffic service provided;

30.2 The hours of operation of the air traffic service and any associated limitations;

30.3 Any constraints or restrictions affecting the service provision; and

30.4 The justification for the selected level of service, based on the aerodrome operator's assessment of the determinant factors relevant to the operation, including:

30.4.1 Nature of the operation;

30.4.2 Airspace environment; and

30.4.3 Aerodrome environment.

5.8 ANO 2016 Article 212 governs the grant of an aerodrome licence by the CAA. This Article, together with Schedule 12, sets out the requirements for the aerodrome manual within the licensing process. An application for an aerodrome licence should be accompanied by an aerodrome manual produced in accordance with CAP 168. For licensed aerodromes, requirements relating to aerodrome manuals

are set out in CAP 168, Chapter 2, The Aerodrome Manual. Chapter 2 – The Aerodrome Manual, Safety Management System and Low Visibility Operations

Air traffic services

2.29 Details of the following:

1. the system for the safe management of air traffic operating on the aerodrome or in the airspace associated with it[1];

[1] Where this is the provision of ATS, details should include the type of ATS (or non-ATS function) and hours of operation.

5.9 In addition, CAP 168 also requires that:

1.4 Once granted a licence, the licence holder is required to maintain the manual in conformity with Chapter 2 of CAP 168, and all aerodrome operating staff must have access to the relevant parts of the manual. The term 'operating staff' means all persons, whether or not the aerodrome licence holder and whether or not employed by the aerodrome licence holder, whose duties are concerned either with ensuring that the aerodrome and airspace within which its visual traffic pattern is normally contained are safe for use by aircraft, or whose duties require them to have access to the aerodrome manoeuvring area or apron.

1.5 The manual will be regarded by the CAA as the primary indication of the standards likely to be achieved by the aerodrome operator. A copy is to be lodged with the CAA. The process for submission of an aerodrome manual is contained in this chapter.

5.10 Even where regulations do not mandate the production of an aerodrome manual, a structured and systematic approach to aerodrome operations remains essential, even for a modest grass strip in a private field. A manual provides a simple and effective way to consolidate all relevant information about the aerodrome and its facilities. It also enables the aerodrome operator, at any level, to clearly describe how safe operations are achieved through defining procedures and supporting information.

5.11 Although an aerodrome manual may be as simple as a single, easy-to-read sheet of information, CAP 168 can still be used as a source of guidance, even where an airfield is not licensed.

CHAPTER 6

Review Process

6.2 Once the assessment process has been completed and an aerodrome has determined the level of ATS provision appropriate to its operation, this should not be the end point. Operations may change over time, and the level or type of ATS provision may need to be adjusted accordingly. It is therefore recommended that aerodromes review their decision at the following intervals:

a. At least every three years; or

b. Immediately if:

(b) a safety incident indicates a need for review;

(c) there is a significant change in the nature or type of aircraft operations or the volume and density of aerodrome traffic.

6.3 A review may determine that a higher level of ATS is required. Equally, it may indicate that a lower level of service is appropriate if there has been a reduction in aerodrome activity.

6.4 Aerodrome operators may also use the review process to confirm the continued suitability of their current level of provision, particularly in advance of an audit (where applicable).

6.5 Any changes identified through the review process should be managed through an appropriate change management process. These changes should be recorded within the aerodrome SMS, and the relevant details updated in the aerodrome manual.

CHAPTER 7
Conclusion

7.2 The determination of an appropriate level of ATS or an alternative non-ATS function is crucial for the safe and efficient management of UK airspace. These options provide aerodrome operators with a choice of scalable, cost-effective solutions that align with the AMS, enable the integration of new technologies and airspace users while maintaining safety and flexibility for general aviation.

7.3 By identifying the risks and hazards associated with their operation and applying appropriate mitigations, aerodrome operators can ensure that the provision of ATS is at a level suitable for their operation. As the experts in their own operations, it is appropriate that aerodrome operators make these decisions. Recording the process used and the decisions made within an SMS, and making it available through the aerodrome manual, allows potential users of the aerodrome to understand any procedures and processes associated with it, as well as any hazards or risks they may encounter.

7.4 Whilst an ATC service is likely to be the most suitable option at larger, busier aerodromes, the ability for an aerodrome operator to select the appropriate level of ATS, or to use an alternative option to provide mitigations against risks, ensures that airspace is managed efficiently and inclusively. This fosters a safe environment for all airspace users, from traditional GA operators to emerging technologies. Promoting a consistent, risk-based approach to determining the need for ATS at aerodromes supports compliance with international standards, improves safety assurance and provides structured guidance to industry stakeholders. These measures are an integral part of the broader airspace modernisation effort, contributing to the UK’s vision of a future-ready airspace system.

ANNEX A

Factors to consider when determining the need for ATS

A1 The following table is designed to assist aerodrome operators in identifying factors that describe the operational environment at their aerodrome and provide a basis for assessing the need for the provision of ATS. These factors are not exhaustive, and not all will be relevant at every aerodrome.

A2 These factors fall into three broad themes as indicated in the table below. Further details on each factor are provided after the table.

<table>
<tr><th>Nature of the operation</th><th>Airspace Environment</th><th>Aerodrome Environment</th></tr>
<tr><td>Category of operations</td><td>Presence of existing control zones and control areas in the vicinity</td><td>Number of landing areas in simultaneous, or near simultaneous, use</td></tr>
<tr><td>Number of aircraft movements</td><td>Presence of other aerodromes in the vicinity</td><td>Presence of vehicles on the aerodrome movement area</td></tr>
<tr><td>Aerodrome traffic density</td><td rowspan="3">Presence of airspace restrictions, advisory radio areas, aerial tactics areas or areas of intense aerial activity in the vicinity</td><td>Environmental constraints</td></tr>
<tr><td>% IFR movements</td><td rowspan="2">Meteorological conditions</td></tr>
<tr><td>Special events and specialised operations</td></tr>
</table>

i) Nature of the Operation

(1) **Category of the Operation**. A mixture of different aircraft types with varying speeds may necessitate the provision of ATS, whereas a relatively high density of traffic involving only one type of operation may not. It is both the type of traffic and the complexity created by interactions between differing aircraft types that are key determinants in assessing the need for ATS. Factors that may increase operational complexity include, but are not limited to, the presence of declared and approved training organisations, mixed and simultaneous operations of aircraft types (including historic or ex-military aircraft capable of speeds greater than 140 knots indicated air speed (KIAS), air taxi operations, and commercial operations.

(2) **Number of aircraft movements per year**. While the number of movements alone does not determine the need for ATS, it is a significant contributor to overall air traffic complexity and, in turn, ATS requirements.

(3) **Aerodrome traffic density**. To assist in determining traffic density, the following guide is provided:

(i) **Light**: Mean busy hour movements not greater than 15 per runway, or typically fewer than 20 total aerodrome movements.

(ii) **Medium**: Mean busy hour movements of 16 to 25 per runway, or typically 20 to 35 total aerodrome movements.

(iii) **Heavy**: Mean busy hour movements of 26 or more per runway, or typically more than 35 total aerodrome movements.

Notes:

1. The number of movements in the mean busy hour is the arithmetic mean over the year of the number of movements in the daily busiest hour.

2. Either a take-off or landing constitutes a movement.

3. A ‘touch-and-go’ constitutes two movements (one take-off and one landing).

(4) **Percentage of IFR movements**. As the number of IFR movements increases, they may reach a level where, to maintain an acceptable level of safety, responsibility for ensuring a safe and efficient flow of air traffic can no longer rest solely with individual pilots. In such cases, ATS provision, particularly ATC service, may be required. The percentage of IFR movements should be based on a five-year mean, including IFR traffic figures for at least the three most recent years and, where available, forecast IFR traffic for no more than the next two years.

(5) **Special events and specialised operations**. Hosting of special events and/or conduct of specialised operations can increase the safety risk in the operating environment by increasing air traffic complexity and potential risk to third parties. This may therefore affect the need for ATS provision. A special event includes, but is not limited to, aircraft races or contests, flying displays, fly-ins, or balloon meets. Specialised operations are defined in UK Reg (EU) No. 965/2012 on Air Operations. Aircraft conducting specialised operations outside the vicinity of the aerodrome, where there is no impact on aerodrome traffic, are not included in this factor. For example, an aircraft conducting a photographic survey 50 nautical miles (NM) from the aerodrome represents a routine departure and arrival, whereas the same aircraft conducting a survey at the aerodrome itself may affect other aerodrome traffic.

(6) **Airspace environment**

(i) **Presence of existing control zones or control areas.** Consideration should be given to the presence of any CTR or CTA in the vicinity, including both proximity to the aerodrome and base level, as both factors may increase operational complexity.

(ii) **Presence of other aerodromes.** Consideration should be given to whether the aerodrome is isolated or has adjacent aerodromes. Where others exist, both the physical distance between them and the distance between their traffic circuits should be considered.

(iii) **Presence of airspace restrictions/advisory areas**. The presence of airspace restrictions (prohibited areas, restricted areas, danger areas), advisory radio areas, aerial tactics areas or areas of intense aerial activity in the vicinity may indicate a higher density of air traffic or airborne activity, potentially increasing the risk of MAC and, therefore, the need for ATS.

(7) **Aerodrome Environment**

(i) Number of landing areas in simultaneous, or near-simultaneous use.

(ii) Presence of vehicles on the aerodrome movement area and whether these vehicles have access to aprons, taxiways or all areas including access to the runway.

(iii) Environmental constraints: surrounding topography, including expanses of open water; the presence of air navigation obstacles; proximity to built-up areas; and areas considered difficult for search and rescue, all affect the need for the provision of ATS at an aerodrome.

(8) **Meteorological conditions**. Whether low visibility operations take place at the aerodrome.

ANNEX B

ATS and non-ATS functions at an Aerodrome

B1 There are several ATS and non-ATS functions available that an aerodrome operator could decide are appropriate for their operation. Further details on each are detailed below:

ATS		
Function / Service	**Provides**	**Additional comments**
Aerodrome flight information service (AFIS)	Advice and information to enable a safe, orderly and expeditious flow of aerodrome traffic on and in the vicinity of an aerodrome. May provide advice and information to aircraft operating in the vicinity of an aerodrome that are not operating as aerodrome traffic. Management of the aerodrome manoeuvring area through specific authorisation of the movement of persons and vehicles, including towed aircraft. Subject to authorisation and in accordance with CAP 797, Appendix F, AFIS can be supplemented by the use of information from an ATS surveillance system.	AFIS is an ATS provided by a certified ANSP overseen by the CAA. AFIS is the minimum ATS required at aerodromes intended to be used for landing, or as an alternate aerodrome, by aircraft engaged on public transport flights whose maximum total weight authorised exceeds 5,700kg[14]. Aerodrome FISOs are licensed by the CAA and are required to observe and analyse developing air traffic situations and to provide timely advice and specific traffic information to assist pilots in discharging their collision avoidance responsibilities. Alerting service is provided in association with AFIS.

[14] Air Navigation (General) Regulations 2006 Article 13(2)(a)

Air traffic control service	Issues clearances, instructions and/or information for the purpose of preventing collision between aircraft under its control and of expediting and maintaining an orderly flow or traffic. Provides separation between flights based upon the flight rules of aerodrome traffic and the airspace classification. Control of the movement of persons and vehicles, including towed aircraft, on the manoeuvring area.	Typically, the CAA would anticipate the provision of ATC service at aerodromes intended for use by international public transport flights. Alerting service and flight information service are provided in additional to the air traffic control service.

Note:

ATS Provision in uncontrolled (class G) Airspace

The UK's approach to ATS in class G (uncontrolled) airspace is complex. While ATC services are provided in classes A–D and to IFR flights in class E airspace, only flight information services (FIS) are available in class G, even where the unit is certified as an ATC unit.

The complexity arises at aerodromes within class G airspace that also have an ATZ. Under Rule 11 of the Rules of the Air Regulations 2015, aircraft must obtain permission from the ATC unit before operating within the ATZ. Although this permission is given using standard ATC procedures and phraseology, it is not formally considered an ATC service because the airspace remains class G. Outside the ATZ, services are provided in accordance with the UK Flight Information Services (CAP 774). The CAA recognises that this arrangement is not well understood and is reviewing it through the AMS to better align with ICAO standards and improve safety.

Non-ATS Functions		
Function / Service	**Provides**	**Additional comments**
SAFETYCOM	SAFETYCOM is a common VHF channel (135.480 MHz) made available for use at aerodromes where no other frequency is allocated, to enable pilots to broadcast their intentions to other aircraft that may be operating on, or in the vicinity of, the aerodrome.	SAFETYCOM is not an ATS. No aeronautical radio station is provided at the aerodrome. Procedures for its use are notified in UK AIP GEN 3.4. Exemplar RTF phraseology is contained within the Radiotelephony Manual (CAP 413).

		Users of SAFETYCOM should be aware of the possibility of frequency congestion and/or breakthrough caused by aircraft transmitting on this common channel at other aerodromes.
Air ground communication service (AGCS)	AGCS provides a single frequency/channel on which aerodrome traffic broadcast their intentions. AGCS is an information facility for exchanges between pilots, and between pilots and the air-ground operator on, for example, aerodrome conditions or other activities at the aerodrome. In addition to information on aerodrome conditions, air-ground operators are permitted to state the number of aircraft known to be operating as aerodrome traffic and to relay the positions of those aircraft, as reported by their pilots.	AGCS is not an ATS. AGCS is intended primarily for the use of aircraft entering or leaving the aerodrome traffic circuit. AGCS may be utilised where the criteria for the provision of an ATS have not been met, but where the aerodrome operator considers that pilots may benefit from the provision of limited information on aerodrome conditions and activity. Air-ground operators may not utilise RT phraseology associated with ATS (namely AFIS and ATC) or which implies the provision of an ATS. Air-ground operators provide information on aerodrome traffic based solely on a pilot's reported position and are not permitted to supplement this information through visual observation of aerodrome traffic. Air-ground operators may provide pilots with a warning for the purpose of avoiding immediate danger (ANO 2016 Article 202(3) refers). Air-ground operators are not permitted to utilise any form of surveillance derived information in the provision of AGCS.

ANNEX C

References

CAP 168 – Licensing of Aerodromes

CAP 670 – Air Traffic Services Safety Requirements

CAP 774 – UK Flight Information Services

CAP 793 – Safe Operating Practices at Unlicensed Aerodromes

CAP 795 – Safety Management Systems – Guidance to Organisations

CAP 1059 – Safety Management Systems – Guidance for small, non-complex organisations

CAP 1122 – Strategic Plan for General Aviation

CAP 1391 – Electronic Conspicuity Devices

CAP 1616 – Airspace Change Process

CAP 1711 – Airspace Modernisation Strategy

CAP 1915 – Airspace Classification Review

CAP 3281 – Progressive Airspace Design: Guidance for Airspace Around UK Aerodromes