

CAP1988

Safety Guidance for Air Rallies, Fly-ins, Air Races/Contests and Charity Events

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Revision history

This is a new CAP. The content contained has been drawn from previous CAA documents, revised, and expanded as appropriate.

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Feedback

The CAA seeks to continually improve its regulation and guidance, and your feedback is helpful to us in doing so. If you have any comments or suggestions about CAP 1988, please send them to ga@caa.co.uk with subject line 'CAP 1988 feedback'.

Terminology, Abbreviations and Definitions

Term	Abbreviation	Definition
Air Navigation Order 2016	ANO	Air Navigation Order 2016 (as amended).
Air Traffic Services	ATS	References to 'ATS' contained in this CAP apply to all ground to air radio telephony transmission communications carried out.
Event Organiser	EO	The EO is the person responsible for all matters pertaining to the wider planning and execution of an event that includes the Air Rallies, Fly-ins, Air Races/Contests & Charity Events and for the safety of the general public, both at the event and those affected by the wider impacts of the event.
Fédération Aéronautique Internationale	FAI	The world air sports federation.
Notices to Aviation	NOTAM	A notice distributed by means of telecommunication containing information concerning the establishment, condition or change in any aeronautical facility, service, procedure or hazard, the timely knowledge of which is essential to personnel concerned with flight operations

Chapter 1

General information

Introduction:

- 1.1 This non-statutory safety guidance is for participating pilots and Event Organisers (EO) of fly-ins, air rallies, races/contests. When such events are conducted in accordance with the normal Rules of the Air (unless specifically permitted or exempted) and do not fall into the scope of CAP403 (Flying Displays and Special Events).
- 1.2 For each event, participation, organisation, and administration require careful planning to maintain acceptable safety standards. This publication offers non-statutory safety guidance and summarises relevant rules to protect both participants and the public.
- 1.3 This document also provides guidance for organised charity events involving multiple aircraft. For charity flights involving a single aircraft, please refer to the guidance in CAP1330.
- 1.4 “Flying displays” are defined in Schedule 1 of the Air Navigation Order 2016, as amended (ANO), as:

“any flying activity deliberately performed for the purpose of providing an exhibition or entertainment at an advertised event open to the public.”
- 1.5 Flying Displays are governed by Article 86 of the ANO which contains specific regulatory requirements (appointment of a Flying Display Director, participating pilots requiring a Display Authorisation, etc) and the requirement to obtain a Permission from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for that Flying Display. These requirements along with safety related CAA guidance on their planning and organisation, are detailed in CAP403 (Flying Displays and Special Events).
- 1.6 For safety guidance on balloon events, please refer to CAP1739 which is due to be published in Spring 2026.
- 1.7 It is important to state that the overall responsibility for individual events listed within this document remains with the event organiser.
- 1.8 Please see **Appendix A** for a general consideration list for event organisers of air rallies and fly-ins, air races/contests and charity events which should be read in conjunction with the following guidance.
- 1.9 **Appendix B and C** contain useful contact information for event organisers to apply for various permissions/notifications/exemptions and other items.

Chapter 2

Air Rallies, Fly-ins, and Charity Events

Introduction:

- 2.1 In most circumstances CAA permissions/exemptions are not required for events such as air rallies and fly-ins, provided none of the ANO Article 86 qualifying conditions are met and all flying activity is conducted in accordance with the ANO, The Rules of the Air Regulations 2015 and UK Standardised Rules of the Air (SERA).
- 2.2 Due to the variety of venues and aircraft types, it is not feasible to consider exhaustively all aspects of such events which range from a small gathering of like-minded friends, right up to a major event which could attract significant public interest.
- 2.3 Because of this variety, the EO should also refer to any available guidance and/or safety procedures that may be published by General Aviation (GA) organisations or other sporting/organising body.

Aerodrome Operator/Air Traffic Services Considerations:

- 2.4 The Air Traffic Services (ATS)/Air Ground Communication Service (AGCS) provider at the aerodrome should be consulted with about the proposed event so that appropriate arrangements can be made to facilitate the event.
- 2.5 For events involving unusually high traffic volumes or complexity, the EO is recommended to contact the CAA – Airspace, Air Traffic Management and Aerodromes (AAA) department at least 90 days in advance of the event.
- 2.6 Established ATS units must notify the CAA of any changes to approved procedures or facilities, including ground station callsigns.
- 2.7 If a temporary ATS or AGCS unit is planned, the EO should consult CAP 670 (ATS Safety Requirements) for full guidance.
- 2.8 If unsure about the required level of ATS or AGCS for an event, it is recommended to contact the appropriate CAA Air Traffic Management Inspectorate via the details below:
 - North Region: Atsnorthern.regionaloffice@caa.co.uk
 - South Region: Atssouthern.regionaloffice@caa.co.uk

2.9 Depending on the event, wider coordination with other airspace users may be recommended, this may include promulgation of a NOTAM or an Airspace Coordination Notice (ACN). Details of how to apply can be found in Appendix B of this document.

Event Planning:

2.10 The EO is recommended to provide detailed briefing material to all pilots prior to the event:

2.11 This is recommended to include:

- Contact details for the EO.
- Airfield Information and layout map including taxi routes and parking areas.
- Departure/Arrival and Circuit Information including any local sensitive/avoid areas.
- Relevant ATS and airspace information.

2.12 If the proposed event is to be held at an unlicensed or off-airfield venue, then a pre-assessment of the terrain, approaches, surfaces, overshoots, and other operational aspects is recommended to be considered.

2.13 For all events, the EO should undertake a comprehensive risk assessment. Information on Risk Assessments can be found in CAP 1059 and also further generic information can be found on the Event Safety page of the Health and Safety Executive, which includes links to useful documents such as the Events Industry Forum (EIF) Event Safety Guide, 'the Purple Guide'.

2.14 Ground manoeuvring can become awkward at some venues with taxiing 'pinch points' which can be exacerbated by soft ground. Planning a taxi flow based on the take-off and landing direction may be worth considering.

2.15 Any briefing material is recommended to include a reminder to pilots that they should operate in accordance with the Rules of the Air. Where possible it is advisable to continue the use of well-established joining and circuit procedures that an airfield may already have to avoid unnecessary complexity.

2.16 Participating pilots are encouraged to use suitable forms of electronic conspicuity.

2.17 The venue may attract members of the general public, and they should be appropriately restricted from active areas of the airfield unless suitably advised by some means of the hazards before entering that area. Where appropriate warning signs are advised to be erected, these may assist with identifying hazards to the public. Children should always be appropriately supervised.

- 2.18 The EO may wish to consider what suitable distance is sensible to exist between persons on site and an active runway. This should consider the types of aircraft visiting and the airfield layout. In some cases, EO's may wish to refer to CAP403 for suggested distances.
- 2.19 If there are co-located activities or events, then it is highly recommended that co-ordination should take place and agreements clearly defined.
- 2.20 A wind indicator should be established (if not already installed). The wind indicator should be located appropriately (suitably distanced from the runway, taxiways, and any obstacles) to avoid being a hazard to aircraft and to ensure accurate wind information is provided.
- 2.21 It is advised that a suitable method of identifying the runway in use from the air is put in place, if non radio traffic is likely.
- 2.22 Action in the event of an accident is highly recommended to be prepared by the EO and briefed to all those with an operational post. If the airfield does not already have an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) then informing the emergency services as early as possible in the planning stages is highly recommended to enable discussions on such items as access and rendezvous points. Provision of on-site emergency equipment and or services should be considered by the EO. The EO may also consider coordinating with their Local Resilience Forum and Safety Advisory Group.
- 2.23 Local emergency services should not form the main basis of any event emergency contingency arrangements. For unlicensed airfields, supplementary guidance for consideration is contained in CAP 793 (Safe Operating Practices at Unlicensed Aerodromes).

Weather minima:

- 2.24 Whilst there are no defined weather minima other than pilots ensuring they are operating in accordance with their license privileges, it is advised that the EO engages in regular communication in the lead up to and during the event to provide any pertinent information that may be relevant and to avoid any excessive periods of congestion or other hazards to air navigation.
- 2.25 EO's may wish to set their own more restrictive weather minima as appropriate for the safety of the event.
- 2.26 Please refer to Appendix A for the list of further considerations.

Charity Events

- 2.27 For charity events comprising of charity flights involving more than one aircraft, the following safety guidance, along with the information in Appendix A is provided.
- 2.28 Where possible it is advisable to continue the use of well-established joining and circuit procedures that an airfield may already have to avoid unnecessary complexity.
- 2.29 It is recommended that a detailed flight route plan and event plan is provided for all pilots in advance, this should ensure that the chance of conflict is mitigated and that flights can avoid areas of high traffic density and/or complex airspace. It is recommended that there is also consideration for safe egress from the route should a flight need to be cut short for any reason.
- 2.30 If significant number of aircraft are expected, a NOTAM is strongly recommended to alert other airspace users. Details of how to apply for a NOTAM can be found in Appendix B of this document.
- 2.31 Pilots are strongly encouraged to use suitable forms of electronic conspicuity.
- 2.32 Pilots should also have available a sufficient safety briefing specific to their aircraft type for passengers and are reminded (if applicable) of the relevant cost sharing regulations that must be adhered to.
- 2.33 For all charity events, the EO in conjunction with the operator of the host airfield should conduct a risk assessment before hosting an event. Information on Risk Assessments can be found in CAP 1059 and also further generic information can be found on the Event Safety page of the Health and Safety Executive, which includes links to useful documents such as the Events Industry Forum (EIF) Event Safety Guide, 'the Purple Guide'.
- 2.34 It is recommended that detailed briefing material is made available in advance of the event for the benefit of participating pilots.
- 2.35 Any briefing material is recommended to include a reminder to pilots that they should operate in accordance with the Rules of the Air.
- 2.36 At the event, a structured live briefing with all participants attending, hosted by the EO, is recommended before flying starts.

Chapter 3

Air Races and Contests

Introduction

3.1 Air racing/contests are a type of motorsport that involve aeroplanes or other types of aircraft that compete over a fixed course, with the winner either achieving the shortest time, the most points, or the closest to a previously estimated time.

Administering an Air Race

3.2 Air racing is generally overseen by an organising body. The national organisation and control of air racing, including the issue of organising permits and competitors' licences, is undertaken by the Racing, Rally and Records Association (RRRA) of the Royal Aero Club. The detailed rules of air racing, which can be obtained from the RRRA, are designed to ensure a high standard of safety. The EO of an air race is recommended to seek the advice of the RRRA as far as possible in advance of the proposed date of the event.

3.3 It is recommended that proposals are discussed with CAA Airspace Regulation and the ATS provider responsible for the management of the specific airspace prior to any firm arrangements being made, as coordination may be required, especially if a restricted area (temporary) is being considered. Please refer to Appendix B for further information on applications.

3.4 For any air race event or contest, consideration should be paid to rules such as low flying, overtaking, and landing with occupied runways. To facilitate such events including air racing, the CAA General Aviation Unit (CAA GAU) can consider providing several permissions/exemptions on specific application, these include:

- Exemption, for both practices and races, for overtaking in the air on both sides under SERA.3210(c)(3);
- Permission, for both practices and races, enabling landing with other aircraft on the runway under Rule 10 (1) of the Rules of the Air Regulations 2015;
- Permission, for both practices and races to permit flight below 500 ft at end of a race in accordance with SERA.5005(f)(2) Minimum Height and Visual Flight Rules.

3.5 EO's may be requested to explain how they will ensure that an acceptable level of safety can be achieved when applying for the above permissions/exemptions. EO's may wish to refer to parts of CAP403 for more detailed advice.

3.6 Article 86 (18) of the ANO states that the requirement for Flying Display Permissions do not apply to aircraft races or contests organised by officially recognised organisations, or the aircraft or pilots participating in them, whether that race, or contest is part of a Flying Display, or not. However, where the public has access to the site of the race or contest, the EO may wish to refer to the sections in CAP403 relating to public safety, particularly in relation to Minimum Separation Distances between aircraft, in flight and on the ground, and the public. This is especially important in enabling the CAA to consider granting any permissions/exemptions to ensure an acceptable level of safety.

3.7 Applications may need to include risk assessments and detailed maps of the flying areas. Further guidance on this can be found in CAP403-Chapter 2. Please refer to Appendix B for further information about applying for CAA Exemptions/Permissions.

3.8 Participating pilots are strongly encouraged to use suitable forms of electronic conspicuity.

Weather minima advised:

The below weather minima are advisable from the RRRA General Rules for Air Racing.

Cloud base minima	Visibility Minima	Other Considerations
Ceiling 300 feet above the sum of the highest point on the course and the minimum race height above ground level.	5 km in flight visibility	No practice or racing should take place within 5km of electrically active storm clouds or areas of known extreme turbulence, windshear, downdraughts, or microbursts. No practice or racing should take place in heavy precipitation or severe icing conditions.

Aerobatic Contests

3.9 Annually there are several aerobatic competitions at various locations in the UK for both fixed wing aircraft and sailplanes. These competitions are regularly run by British Aerobatics, who are the recognised UK governing body for Aerobatics under the auspices of the Royal Aero Club and is affiliated to the Federation Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) for the administration of contests to international rules.

3.10 Aerobatic contest flying is subject to the Rules and Code of Conduct of British Aerobatics, FAI (CIVA) Sporting Code and agreed local flying regulations.

3.11 Contest flights will take place in an aerobatic box, a notional 1000 M cube of airspace usually orientated over, or to one side of an airfield. The location of this box should be considered carefully and briefed appropriately.

3.12 Aerobatic contests involve high-performance flying, so a NOTAM is strongly recommended to alert other airspace users. A contest NOTAM typically defines a

2 Nautical Miles radius up to 5000 FT above aerodrome level around the aerodrome or contest area. In some cases, a restricted area (temporary) may be considered. For further information please refer to Appendix B of this document.

- 3.13 If this area extends into controlled airspace (CAS), the Contest Director should contact the relevant controlling authority at least 28-days in advance to seek approval for entry into the airspace block and agree on procedures and SSR use. Without approval, all aerobatic aircraft must remain clear of CAS.
- 3.14 Pilots are strongly encouraged to use electronic conspicuity and, if equipped, squawk 7004 unless instructed otherwise whilst conducting aerobatics.
- 3.15 In certain circumstances there may be a requirement for a SERA.5005(f)(2) permission for flying below 500ft to be obtained from the CAA. An application will need to include risk assessments and detailed maps of the flying areas. Further guidance on this can be found in CAP403-Chapter 2 and in Appendix B of this document.
- 3.16 It is recommended that briefing material is made available in advance of the event. At the event, a structured live briefing hosted by the EO is recommended before competition flying starts with the participation of all competitors.
- 3.17 The EO is recommended to ensure there is two-way communication between contest aircraft and the organisation to allow the flight to be suspended or discontinued if an urgent safety concern or emergency should arise. If a temporary discrete frequency is required, then applicants should complete the Ofcom form as detailed in Appendix B of this document.
- 3.18 Where the public has access to the site of the contest, the EO is recommended to consider referring to the sections in CAP403 relating to public safety, particularly in relation to Minimum Separation Distances between aircraft, in flight and on the ground, and the public.

Other Contests:

- 3.19 Other contests that are not primarily performed for public exhibition/entertainment, may include, but are not limited to, activities such as Helicopter Contests, Spot Landing/STOL events and Flour Bombing. The following safety guidance, along with the list in Appendix A is provided.
- 3.20 It is recommended that briefing material is made available in advance of the event. At the event, a structured live briefing is recommended before competition flying starts with the participation of all competitors alongside reasonable supervision by the organisation.
- 3.21 For helicopters contests, the EO may wish to consider relevant information from the FAI Rotorcraft Commission (CIG) and the Helicopter Club of Great Britain.

3.22 The EO is reminded that appropriate Air Navigation Order 2016 Article 89 Permissions are required for any activity involving the dropping of articles from an aircraft. Further information can be found in Appendix B.

3.23 Consideration should be made of sufficient distance between the event activities and any general public who may have access to the site. Appropriate warnings should be in place for any public who can access an active part of the airfield.

3.24 It is also recommended that due consideration should be given, based on the type and size of aircraft participating, to ensure a suitable distance either side of any active runway centreline (regardless of formal demarcation) is kept clear of all persons. Specific consideration should be made to minimise risk to any adjudicators or event staff in their roles.

Gliding Competitions:

3.25 Gliding competitions are organised as cross-country flying events over several days, where routes utilising several turnpoints are set as a task with distances of over 300km not unusual. The event is highly weather dependent.

3.26 Several gliding competitions take place each year across the UK. Participation could range from 10 to 100 gliders or more.

3.27 Gliding competitions in the UK are overseen under national governing body arrangements, the British Gliding Association (BGA) have detailed governance and procedures for the organisation of these events in the UK.

3.28 For several competitions, the CAA issues airspace coordination notices and facilitates access to controlled airspace in conjunction with ATS Units. The EO is advised to speak to the BGA to ensure the relevant contact can be made. Considerations to enable such permissions and necessary promulgation should refer to Appendix B of this document for further information.

3.29 The EO is advised to take note of potential 'choke points and the potential risk of airspace infringements when designing a task. NOTAM promulgation is recommended to provide situational awareness to other airspace users on the specific daily route the competitors are flying.

3.30 Prior to the event, it is recommended that a detailed briefing document is made available to all competitors. At the event, a structured live briefing is recommended before competition flying starts with the participation of all competitors.

3.31 Participating pilots are strongly encouraged to use suitable forms of electronic conspicuity and are particularly reminded of their obligations to comply with SERA.5005(f) unless operating in accordance with a CAA exemption or permission.

Appendix A- General Considerations for Events

The following general considerations may be read in conjunction with the above document for more specific guidance.

Pre-Event Information	Notes
<p>A comprehensive written brief covering the arrangements for the event should be circulated in advance to all participants of the event. Copies of this brief should also be made available at the event. Recommended content could include.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact details for the event organiser and personnel on the day. ▪ Outline of the event programme. ▪ Airfield Information and layout map including taxi routes and parking areas. ▪ Departure/Arrival and Circuit Information including any local sensitive/avoid areas. ▪ Relevant ATS and Airspace information. ▪ Weather Minima (if applicable). ▪ The timing and location of the Event Briefing (if applicable) including how to join remotely if that will be possible. 	
Visiting Pilot Notifications	Notes
Where visiting pilots are expected, the event is likely to be notified as being 'Prior Permission Required.' A contact number/email address for visiting pilot's information on the day of the event is advised to be circulated.	
Reporting Points	Notes
Ensure a place is available for visiting pilots to report to on arrival and departure.	
Ensure safety briefing information is available at this place and that a member of event staff is in attendance or contactable at all times.	

Event Briefing – at the event	Notes
<p>An individual or committee should be appointed to oversee the event and to make safety decisions where required. Where deemed necessary (especially for races/contests), a member or team of event staff should be nominated to provide the Event Briefing shortly prior to its start. Where participants are scheduled to arrive mid-Event, consideration should be given to offering remote access to the Event Briefing. The Event Briefing should usually aim to cover the following (non-inclusive) areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confirm the details provided in the Pre-Event Information Pack and any subsequent changes. ▪ Weather (actuals & forecast) for the Event. ▪ The schedule for the Event. ▪ Routing / traffic flows, including reporting points. ▪ Relevant NOTAMs, local restrictions, and sensitive areas. ▪ Communication and transponder usage, including during emergencies. ▪ Contingencies (e.g. In the event of bad weather or emergencies) 	
Insurance	Notes
<p>While UK civil aviation legislation does not mandate third-party insurance for aviation events, organisers and participants are strongly advised to consider it and seek professional guidance as required, as other non-aviation requirements may apply. Insurance validity typically depends on compliance with legal and permission conditions; noncompliance may void coverage. It is important to state that the overall responsibility for individual events remains with the event organiser.</p>	

Public Attendance (where applicable)	Notes
<p>Ensure members of the public are restricted from active airfield areas unless suitably advised/briefed that they are entering an area active with aircraft. Where appropriate warning signs and fencing should be erected.</p>	
<p>All visitors should be reminded of the need to refrain from smoking or dropping anything. Where appropriate warning signs should be erected.</p>	
<p>Children should always be accompanied and be supervised.</p>	
Emergency Response Plan	Notes
<p>Create and distribute an Event Emergency Response Plan to all event staff and the aerodrome operator.</p>	
<p>Inform the local emergency services/local resilience forum/local safety action group as early as possible in the planning stages and ensure they are aware of any emergency response plan.</p>	
<p>Ensure a reliable and tested method of communication has been established to communicate with all external services and key personnel in the event of an emergency.</p>	
Weather Considerations	Notes
<p>Clear lines of communication should be available to ensure that participants are kept up to date with any changes to the event, to prevent any dangerous congestion on the airfield.</p>	

Appendix B- Application Processes and Timescales

Action Required	Minimum Required Notice Period	Fee applicable	Web Link	Tel No:	Email
SERA, Rules of the Air and Article Dropping Permissions /Exemptions (CAA General Aviation Unit)	42 Days	Yes	Special Events UK Civil Aviation Authority	01293 573988	ga@caa.co.uk
Restricted Area (Temporary) (CAA Airspace Regulation)	90 Days	TBC (Subject to Scheme of Charges Consultation 26/27)	Airspace restrictions UK Civil Aviation Authority	01293 983880	arops@caa.co.uk
Airspace Coordination Notice (CAA Airspace Regulation)	42 Days	No	Event and obstacle notification UK Civil Aviation Authority	01293 983880	arops@caa.co.uk
NOTAM Action (CAA Airspace Regulation)	2 Working Days Minimum	No	Airspace Co-ordination and Obstacle Management	01293 983880	arops@caa.co.uk
Temporary Discrete Frequency (Ofcom)	60 Days	Yes	OfW586a Aeronautical radio ground station licence application form	N/A	spectrum.licensing@ofcom.org.uk

Appendix C – Useful Links and Email Addresses

Name	Link
Aeronautical Information Circulars	NATS Aeronautical Information Service
Air Navigation Order 2016 (as amended)	The Air Navigation Order 2016
British Aerobatics	British Aerobatics
British Gliding Association	British Gliding Association
CAA Flying Displays and Special Events	Flying displays & Special events
CAP403 (Flying Displays and Special Events)	CAP403
CAP 670 (Air Traffic Services Safety Requirements)	CAP 670
CAP793 (Safe Operating Practices at Unlicensed Aerodromes)	CAP793
CAP1059- (Safety Management Systems: Guidance for small, noncomplex organisations)	CAP 1059
CAP1330- (Charity Flight Guidance)	CAP1330
CAP1590- (Cost Sharing Flights)	Cost sharing flights
Fédération Aéronautique Internationale	FAI
General Aviation Unit (CAA) Homepage	General aviation
Health and Safety Executive- Event Safety	Event Safety
Helicopter Club of Great Britain	Helicopter Club of Great Britain.
ORS 5 CAA Schemes of charges	ORS 5 - Schemes of charges
Royal Aero Club- Racing, Rally and Records Association	Racing, Rally and Records Association (RRRA)
Rules of the Air Regulations 2015	Legislation.gov.uk
Standardised European Rules of the Air (UK SERA)	Standardised European Rules of the Air
Email Addresses	
CAA Airspace Regulation (Utilisation)	AROps@caa.co.uk
CAA General Aviation Unit	ga@caa.co.uk