

Safety Net

Safe Operations around Controlled Airspace



A Violation of Controlled Airspace (VCA) is the unauthorised entry of an aircraft into airspace that requires a clearance to enter, or may be restricted or closed for purposes of special flying activity or other reasons.

In a VCA, there is the potential for your aircraft to operate in unsafe proximity to other aircraft. A VCA may also increase Air Traffic Control (ATC)/pilot workload and result in delays to other aircraft.

There are a number of practises which may help you avoid a VCA.

Flight Planning

- ensure you have accurate airspace charts
- thoroughly familiarise yourself with local airspace and other aeronautical issues
- brief yourself on restricted area activations for your planned route, including NOTAM briefing
- consider Control Area (CTA) steps along and around your planned route
- consider the navigation tolerances (*see* AIP ENR 1.1) that apply to your proposed route and level

Navigation

- accurately know your position relative to the CTA steps
- verify your position if you unexpectedly arrive well ahead of or after your anticipated time of arrival
- if in doubt, ask for navigation assistance from ATC

Transponder Usage

- ensure your transponder is serviceable before you fly
- set your transponder to ON/ALT with code 1200 selected. This will make your aircraft visible to ATC and the Traffic Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) in other aircraft

Radio Frequencies

- actively monitor the appropriate area radio frequency and listen for transmissions that include your callsign
- be aware that ATC may direct calls to you based upon your position, altitude or heading
- *Speak up* if you think a transmission may have been directed to you

Global Positioning Systems (GPS)

- always be aware of your position relative to CTA or other restricted areas such as military airspace
- always ensure that you apply the appropriate GPS tolerances
- remember that VFR flight rules require navigation with visual reference to the ground

Warning:

Be aware that CTA steps are generally based upon the location of the aerodrome DME/VOR, while GPS often uses the aerodrome reference point which might be a couple of miles away from the DME/VOR. Therefore apply a safety buffer.

Using Air Traffic Control

- controllers are there to help you
- subject to workload, a controller can assist with navigation advice, traffic information and weather

In-Flight Diversions

Warning:

If due to weather or other factors a change to your pre-planned route is required, be cautious as these situations have led to VCA occurrences. If you require assistance with an in-flight diversion or a clearance request, contact ATC as soon as this is recognised.

Requesting Clearance

- you should request a clearance at least five minutes before reaching the CTA step
- a submitted flight plan will expedite clearances
- have a contingency in case a clearance is not available

Safety Programs and Promotions

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