SAFETY NET

SAFE OPERATIONS AROUND CONTROLLED AND RESTRICTED AIRSPACE

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

If you are involved in an AI, there is the potential for your aircraft to operate in unsafe proximity to other aircraft or harmful activity (for example, where live weapons are being fired). An AI may also increase air traffic control (ATC) or pilot workload and result in delays to other aircraft.

There are a number of practices which may help you avoid an AI.

PLANNING YOUR FLIGHT

- Ensure you use current 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 (some types of restricted areas may not be displayed on charts but will be activated by NOTAM).

- Consider Control Area (CTA) steps along and around your planned route.

NAVIGATING

- Know your position accurately relative to CTA steps and restricted area boundaries.

- Verify your position if you unexpectedly arrive well ahead of, or after, your anticipated time of arrival.

- If in doubt about your position, ask ATC for assistance.

USING A TRANSPONDER

Ensure your transponder is working before you fly.

If operating VFR in Class G or E airspace, set your transponder to ON/ALT with code 1200 selected or ATC-assigned code. This will make your aircraft visible to ATC and the Airborne Collision Avoidance Systems in other aircraft.

USING THE RADIO

- Actively monitor the appropriate area radio frequency and listen for transmissions.

- 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.

USING GLOBAL NAVIGATION SATELLITE SYSTEM (GNSS)

Pilots operating under the VFR may use GNSS to **supplement** map reading and other visual navigation techniques. See AIP GEN 1.5 for GNSS operations and conditions including area navigation for VFR at night.

Caution:

Be aware that CTA steps may be based on various references including the aerodrome DME, the Aerodrome Reference Point (ARP) or runway threshold. On the VTC the steps will refer to the datum used (eg 30 DME, 7 NM ARP, 8 NM FM THR RWY 01).

USING AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

- Controllers are there to help you.

- Subject to workload, a controller can assist with navigation advice, traffic information and weather.

DIVERTING IN-FLIGHT

Caution:

If a change to your pre-planned route is required, be cautious as these situations have led to infringements. If you require assistance with an in-flight diversion or a clearance request, contact ATC as soon as possible.

REQUESTING CLEARANCE

- You should request a clearance well before reaching the CTA step (five minutes prior is a good guide).

- A submitted flight notification will expedite clearances.

- Have a contingency in case a clearance is not available.

RESTRICTED AREAS

Restricted areas may be permanent or temporary and not necessarily associated with military activity (for example, a police exclusion zone). Any restricted area, including Temporary Restricted Areas (TRA), can be made active with short notice. Check AIP SUP for TRAs associated with military exercises.

RESTRICTED AREA CLASSIFICATIONS

Restricted areas have been allocated a conditional status. This status is to give an indication of the likelihood of obtaining a clearance to fly through restricted airspace. NOTAMs may be issued to indicate changes to the conditional status—check this during flight planning.

Conditional Status RA1: pilots may flight plan through the restricted area and, under normal circumstances when area is active, expect a clearance from ATC.

Conditional Status RA2: pilots cannot plan and should not expect a clearance through the area when active, although tracking may be offered on a tactical basis by ATC. Note that some routes specified in ERSA GEN FPR may be planned under agreement with the Department of Defence, however a clearance from ATC is not assured.

Conditional Status RA3: pilots must not flight plan through the restricted area and clearances will not be available.

Read the restricted area conditional status carefully and plan accordingly. If you cannot determine the conditional status of an area, treat it as an 'RA3' and avoid it.

If you have any doubt about the current status of a restricted area, check with ATC on the area frequency.

AIRSPACE INFRINGEMENT HOTSPOTS

At locations where airspace infringements occur frequently, Airservices and Defence have produced Airspace Infringement Hotspot flyers to improve pilot awareness and provide additional planning guidance.

Hotspot flyers are available online in Airservices pilot and airside safety information, www.airservicesaustralia.com/flight-briefing/pilot-and-airside-safety

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Safety Net—Using GNSS as a VFR navigation tool

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