



Safety net – the view from the Brisbane Tower

Pilots are now returning to the airspace after long periods of inactivity to what is now an increasingly active and complex airspace. Other airspaces in Australia are comparable to Brisbane in terms of activity and complexity, however controllers at the Brisbane Tower are currently seeing a spike of airspace infringements – more so than other similar airspaces.

Brisbane's parallel runway and large volume of heavy RPT traffic create an active and complex environment. Brisbane TCU's proximity to Amberley and Archerfield also contributes to the airspace's complexity by increasing both volume and type of traffic.

This mix can increase the cognitive load for pilots and lead to pilot error. However, it is currently unknown as to why this spike is occurring in Brisbane in particular. It is, therefore, important for pilots who fly in and around Brisbane airspace to be vigilant of possible risks and take every precaution to minimise risk.

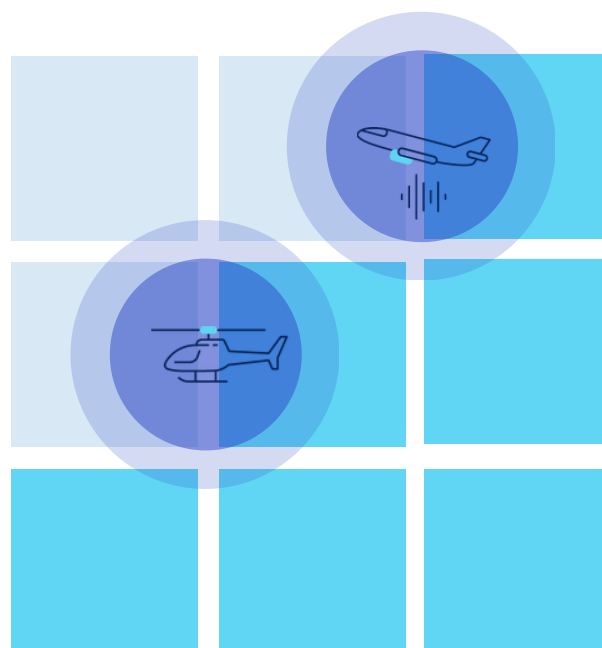
The following are the main types of unsafe operations controllers are currently seeing from the Brisbane Tower and some tips to avoid making them.

Remember, ATC is there to help. They would much rather you ask for assistance than continue and increase the risk to yourself and other airspace users.

In the air

Observed behaviour: entering Class C airspace without clearance and, in a portion, failing to respond to ATC attempt to contact them.

These actions can result in potential loss of separation, including with fast-moving RPT and high-capacity heavy jet aircraft. They also cause increased workload for ATC, resulting in subsequent delays of air traffic coordination and activity.



Planning your flight

When planning your route, familiarise yourself with controlled and restricted area boundaries and take note of the CTA steps along your planned route. Ensure to use current airspace charts.

Check the status of temporary restricted areas, in particular with reference to Amberly and Greenbank airspaces.

Check NAIPS and ERSA - PRD areas to confirm active hours. Remember that some restricted areas can be activated at short notice, so it is important to check relevant NOTAMS before your flights.

During your flight

Always maintain a listening watch on the radio by ensuring:

- you are on the correct frequency
- your radio is working and turned up
- you use the information gained from listening to build your situation awareness and to assist you to see-and-avoid other aircraft.

Ensure you do not climb too soon on departure from Brisbane and leave a buffer between you and the CTA steps.

If you intend to enter Class C or D airspace, request a clearance well ahead of your predicted entry time. Five minutes prior is a good guide. If flying VFR, stay vigilant of your altitude and perform frequent position fix with ground references to stay on track.

Case study

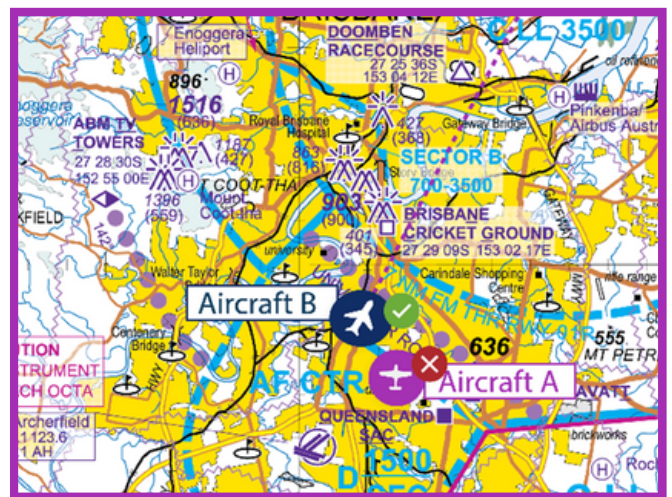
Aircraft A was observed entering CTA south of YBBN at A021 without a clearance, where the base of this CTA is A015. Aircraft B, a commercial passenger flight, was cleared the for approach. There was less than 3NM between the two aircraft, however there was more than 1000 ft vertically.

The controller identified the situation and passed a safety alert to both aircraft. Aircraft B advised they had seen the aircraft on TCAS and there was no resolution advisory (RA) or traffic advisory (TA). Aircraft A then vacated the CTA without further incident. ATC advised them of their infringement and instructed them to remain outside Class C.

This case presented potential risk both to Aircraft A's pilot and passengers, as well as those on board Aircraft B's flight. However, separation was maintained at all times and, due to Aircraft B's effective communication with ATC, controllers were prepared to provide Aircraft B with alternative instructions if needed.

While this risk was not realised, ATC did incur increased communications with aircraft and coordination in the ATS system.

It is important to understand the procedures involved in flying in and around controlled airspace. If you have not operated near controlled airspace recently or are not used to regularly operating in controlled airspace, it is a good idea to refresh your knowledge.



More information

For more specific operational information about flying around Brisbane and the Gold Coast, please access CASA's Stay OnTrack series at casa.gov.au/resources-and-education/publications-and-resources/industry-guides-and-publications/pilot-guides/stay-ontrack-series

If you have any questions or would like to provide us some feedback on this material, please email us at safetypromotions@airservicesaustralia.com.

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