

LEICESTERSHIRE AERO CLUB



COMMUNITY RELATIONS POLICY

LEICESTERSHIRE AERO CLUB POLICY DOCUMENT



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Leicestershire Aero Club Community Relations Policy (CRP) is a reference document for the use of airfield operators, aircraft users and interested local parties. It contains information on published rules and procedures which are either regulated by the force of law (the Air Navigation Order) or applied by Leicestershire Aero Club (LAC) in an effort to reduce the effect of aircraft on the local community.

In order to mitigate the effect of operations on local communities, Leicestershire Aero Club has voluntarily introduced a Community Relations Policy. Whilst the establishment of this policy demonstrates that Leicestershire Aero Club is conscious of the need to fit into the wider community and be a good neighbour, it should be noted that it is not possible for procedures to address every possible operation, for example, in respect of areas where aircraft performance characteristics and operational requirements allow little latitude, especially in the immediate vicinity of the aerodrome. This policy shall prioritise the safe conduct of flight and the management of risks to both aircraft operators and the local population.

This policy is not intended to replace published rules procedures including but not limited to the Air Navigation Order (ANO), Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) or the LAC Operating Manual.

Copies will be distributed in accordance with the published policy distribution. There is no copyright on the document, so it can be copied and circulated as deemed appropriate. A copy will always be available in Leicestershire Aero Club's airfield operations and an electronic version available to download on the company website <http://www.leicesterairport.com>.

1.2 Applicability

The Leicestershire Aero Club CRP is enshrined in the AIP section 2.21 and made readily available on the Leicestershire Aero Club internet site.

It is individual pilots' responsibility to ensure they fly commensurate with published procedures and adhere to Rule 5 of the ANO; in that an aircraft shall not be flown closer than 500ft to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure subject to the exceptions of Rule 6 of the ANO which includes landing and taking off from a licensed aerodrome.

Published procedures apply to all aircraft using Leicestershire Aerodrome, other than emergency aircraft such as the police, air ambulance and military traffic.

1.3 Flying Activity

Leicester Airport is operated by Leicestershire Aero Club Limited (LAC), it is a busy general aviation aerodrome serving a varied and diverse customer base.

Regular users are both based and visiting, training and privately owned aircraft and include both fixed wing and rotary (helicopters).

2. SUMMARY RULES OF THE AIR

All aircraft operating in the UK must comply with the UK Air Navigation Order (ANO), The Rules of Air Regulations and Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA).

2.1. SERA.5001 (VMC Visibility and Distance from Cloud Minima) and SERA.5005(a) (Visual Flight Rules)

2.1.1 The CAA has issued Official Record Series 4 General Exemption E 4073 to permit Visual Flight Rules (VFR) flights to operate in the following conditions:

Fixed-wing - by day only; remaining clear of cloud with the surface in sight and with a flight visibility of at least 5km. If the aircraft flies at an indicated air speed of 140kts or less to give adequate opportunity to observe other traffic and any obstacles in time to avoid a collision.

Helicopters – by day only; remaining clear of cloud with the surface in sight and with a flight visibility of at least 1500m. If the helicopter flies at an indicated air speed of 140kts or less to give adequate opportunity to observe other traffic and any obstacles in time to avoid a collision.

2.1.2 At night aircraft must be flown clear of cloud and with the surface in sight; at a height not less than 300m (1000ft) above the highest obstacle within a radius of 600m from the aircraft when over the congested areas of cities, towns or settlements or over an open-air assembly of persons: and

Elsewhere than specified above, at a height of more than 150m (500ft) above the ground or water, or 150m (500ft) above the highest obstacle within a radius of 150m (500ft) from the aircraft.

2.1.3 The pilot is solely responsible for the operation of an aircraft and for determining the flight path to comply with VFR.

2.2. Approaches to Landing or Forced Landing

2.2.1 The CAA permits under SERA.3105, SERA.5005(f) and SERA.5015(b) an aircraft to fly below 150m above the ground or water if it is flying in accordance with normal aviation practice and:

- a) practising approaches to land or procedures at an aerodrome
- b) practising approaches to forced landings other than at an aerodrome if it is not flown closer than 150m (500ft) to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure.

2.3. Minimum Height

2.3.1 SERA.3105 Except when necessary for take-off or landing, aircraft shall not be flown over congested areas of cities, towns or settlements or over an open-air assembly of persons, unless at a height as will permit, in the event of an emergency arising, a landing to be made without hazard to persons or property on the surface.

2.3.2 Except for take-offs and landings, the minimum height for VFR flights over congested areas of cities, towns or settlements or over an open-air assembly of persons will be not less than 300m (1,000ft) above the highest obstacle within 600m from the aircraft. Elsewhere it will be 150m (500ft) above the ground or water or 150m (500ft) above the highest obstacle within a radius of 150m (500ft) from the aircraft (SERA.5005(f)).

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2.4. Maneuvering Helicopters

The CAA permits, under SERA.3105 and SERA.5005(f), a helicopter to fly below 150m (500ft) above the ground or water or closer than 150m (500ft) to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure if it is conducting manoeuvres, in accordance with normal aviation practice, within the boundaries of an aerodrome provided it is no closer than 60m to any persons, vessels, vehicles or structures located outside the aerodrome.

2.5 Prohibiting Over-flight of Specific Areas within the ATZ

2.5.1 Leicestershire Aero Club Limited has no legal authority to prohibit aircraft from over flying specific areas within the Aerodrome Traffic Zone (ATZ).

2.5.2 Pilots may be requested to avoid certain areas whenever possible.

2.5.3 The aerodrome licensee publishes circuit diagrams showing a circuit pattern that will minimise the over-flight of built up areas within the ATZ. These circuit diagrams including noise sensitive areas can be found on the website under Airfield Information.

2.6 Arrival and Departures

2.6.1 EASA Air Operations Regulations Part-NCO Annex VII The pilot-in-command shall take into account published noise abatement procedures to minimize the effect of aircraft noise while ensuring that safety has priority over noise abatement.

2.6.2 Arrival and departure procedures are published to assist pilots in the safe operation of their aircraft and minimise the disturbance caused to local residents. The majority of flights will follow these procedures. Routings for aircraft operating under VFR cannot be enforced by Leicestershire Aero Club as the pilot may need to deviate to comply with the Standardised European Rules of the Air and/or the conditions of their licence.

3. AERODROME OPERATIONS

3.1 Circuit Patterns

3.1.1 At Leicester Airport the circuit pattern will be contained within the Aerodrome Traffic Zone (airspace radius 2nm up to 2000ft above aerodrome level).

3.1.2 Pilots are requested to adhere to the published circuit patterns and procedures. The pilot in command is responsible for the safety and operation of their aircraft at all times. All aircraft based at Leicester Airport will endeavour to maintain the agreed circuit pattern and procedures as stipulated by the LAC Operating Manual.

3.1.3 Circuit Training is an essential part of pilot ab-initio and continuation training. Some of this training is done at dispersed airfields which enhance the trainees navigating ability as well as reducing the noise nuisance at Leicester Airport. Leicester Airport operates a circuit height of 1,200ft Above Ground Level for fixed wing aircraft, and 700ft Above Ground Level for Helicopters.

3.1.4 Part of essential safety training includes practice engine failures. Single engine aircraft will be seen to manoeuvre toward open ground where a forced landing could take place but will climb away remaining above 500ft at all times.

3.1.5 Low-level circuits become necessary when a low cloud base determines that a normal height visual circuit cannot be flown. These manoeuvres are practiced on good weather days in preparation for inclement weather. These circuits will differ in pattern and height from standard published circuits.

3.1.6 Pilots may deviate from the prescribed circuit pattern due to a number of factors including student pilots making an error, visiting pilots misidentifying the locations or the pilot deciding that they need to do so in accordance with the operation of their aircraft.

3.1.7 Helicopters also fly a rectangular circuit pattern parallel to the fixed-wing runway in use. These circuits are generally flown inside the standard fixed circuit and at 700ft above ground level.

3.2 Departures

3.2.1 All fixed wing aircraft will depart from one of the 6 available runways dependent upon weather conditions. The published procedures request all departures to be on the runway heading or via the published circuit for the nominated runway in use as required and to climb out until a minimum of 500ft before turning.

3.2.2 Noise sensitive areas are stipulated and pilots are requested to avoid over flight of these areas.

3.2.3 Helicopters are requested to depart the ATZ not above 700ft above the aerodrome.

3.3 Arrivals

3.3.1 All fixed wing aircraft are requested to conduct a 'standard overhead join' and will therefore approach the aerodrome at 2,000ft and descend to the published circuit height on the 'deadside' of the nominated runway in use, in order to join the circuit in preparation for landing.

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3.3.2 Noise sensitive areas are stipulated and pilots are requested to avoid over flight of these areas.

3.3.3 Helicopters are requested to route inbound at 700ft above the aerodrome.

3.4 Night Flying

3.4.1 Official night is defined as beginning 30 minutes after sunset and ending 30 minutes before sunrise.

3.4.2 There is a core requirement for Leicester Airport to operate night training flights. Further, night flying is a perishable skill and those based pilots with a night rating are required to undertake a specified number of hours of flight per annum.

3.5 Noise Abatement

3.5.1 Pilots are requested to follow the published circuit patterns in accordance with the nominated runway in use.

3.5.2 Pilots are requested to avoid flying over the villages of Houghton-on-the-Hill, Little Stretton, Stoughton, Oadby, Evington, Kings Norton and Great Glen where possible.

3.5.3 It is not possible to request pilots to avoid flying over individual properties as this is not conducive to the safe operation of an aircraft during a critical stage of flight.

3.6 Operating Restrictions

The Aerodrome Licensee publishes certain local procedures or restrictions for the safe operation of the aerodrome and to minimise the nuisance caused to local residents. These include:

- a) club hours of operation are 09:00 until 17:00 every day, with extended evening flying until 20:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays (private flying may take place outside these hours).
- b) pilots are requested to operate their aircraft in a manner that will minimise the disturbance caused to local residents.
- c) pilots are requested to adhere to the published circuit patterns and noise abatement procedures.

3.7 Enforcement

3.7.1 Leicestershire Aero Club is not responsible for enforcing the regulations set out in the Air Navigation Order or the Rules of the Air Regulations.

3.7.2 Leicestershire Aero Club provides an Air Ground Radio service for the purpose of providing information to pilots to aid in the safe operation of their flights. It is not permitted for this service to issue instructions to pilots.

3.7.3 Leicestershire Aero Club will take appropriate action involving individual pilots or operators if aircraft operations are not consistent with the terms of the aerodromes Community Relations Policy.

4. REPORTING OBSERVATIONS

4.1 General Policy

The Leicestershire Aero Club wishes to maintain a good relationship with the community and particularly those living close to Leicester Airport. By its nature, the operation will result in some members of the public voicing concerns. These concerns will be dealt with by Leicestershire Aero Club in a constructive and helpful manner and if aircraft operations are not consistent with the terms of the aerodromes Community Relations Policy then appropriate action will be taken involving individual pilots or operators.

Leicestershire Aero Club will review aerodrome practices in this important aspect of its operation from time to time to ensure community representatives and individuals are dealt with in a manner which will maintain good relations.

4.2 Logging Reports

4.2.1 Leicestershire Aero Club is unfortunately not staffed to deal directly with reports from the local community. The Council of Management's primary responsibility is for the safe operation of the aerodrome which as a result means non-operational telephone calls cannot always be taken. As such Leicestershire Aero Club has provided additional dedicated means to report observations of aircraft which may be contravening the policy.

4.2.2 Reports must be made via one of the following means:

a) By telephone to the Operations Desk on 0116 2592360. Given that the Operations Desk also operates the Air/Ground Radio and book members and visitors in and out of the club, they may not be able to give you the attention required to submit your report and might ask that you use one of the methods below at busy times.

b) Online via the Community page under the Airfield section of the Leicestershire Aero Club website <http://www.leicesterairport.com>.

c) By letter to: The Airfield Manager, Leicestershire Aero Club, Gartree Road, Leicester, LE2 2FG.

4.2.4 Reports about noise or flying operations on the Aerodrome or within the ATZ will be dealt with by Aerodrome Management.

4.2.5 Leicestershire Aero Club has introduced a Code of Practice with respect to the handling of reported observations. Wherever possible the following details should be included in verbal or written reports:

a) The point of noncompliance with the published Community Relations Policy i.e. Night Flying continuing after agreed cessation time, low flying in contravention of the rules of the air, etc.

b) Type of aircraft, colour with registration letters, date, time and location.

c) The name, address and telephone number and e-mail of the reporter.

4.3 Procedure for Dealing with Reports

4.3.1 Where a Leicestershire Aero Club representative receives a call to submit an Observation Report over the telephone the following code should be adhered to:

- a) Remain calm, polite, helpful and professional at all times.
- b) If for operational reasons the call cannot be taken, advise the caller that it is not possible to deal with their report at this time and ask them to please submit their report online through our website which can be found in the Community section under Airfield, or in writing to the Airfield Manager.
- c) If you are able to take the call, ensure you request all details required to complete the Observation Report. It is recommended that if you receive a call directly you open the form on the website and enter the details directly into the form.
- d) In cases where it is believed the operation is within the scope of normal operating procedures the reporter should be advised of this. The call should still be logged and you should note that this was advised in the Additional Information section.
- e) If the caller is unable to provide adequate information that would enable us to take follow up action, for example, they do not have the registration, cannot describe the aircraft, the caller should be advised that without such information it is unlikely we could take any action. The call should still be logged and you should note that this was advised in the Additional Information section.
- g) Callers should be advised that it is not always possible to respond to individual persons who have reported observations however all observations will be accurately logged for later review and discussion during Council of Management Meetings.
- f) On submission of Observation Reports either by Leicestershire Aero Club as above or directly by the reporter, an email of the report will be automatically sent to the Airfield Manager and also to the reporter. This email will include a unique reference number for the report.
- g) In the event that the callers' behaviour is aggressive, abusive or inappropriate, they should be advised that such behaviour is not acceptable and the call will be terminated if it continues. If the behaviour continues you should advise the caller that you are terminating the call. The call should still be logged and you should note that this occurred in the Additional Information section.
- h) If the caller is unhappy or feels the information provided is not acceptable to them, you should advise the reporter to submit their observation in writing.

4.3.2 All reported Observations shall be logged in a master observations log which shall be reviewed on a regular basis by LAC Council of Management and follow up actions should be taken where appropriate and the information is adequate to do so. The master observations log shall be updated to reflect the review of the observation.

4.3.3 A daily record of the runway in use and circuit direction along with weather and airfield conditions shall be kept.