

RA 3263 - Aerodrome Classification

Rationale *There is a requirement to classify MOD Aerodromes.*

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Regulation **Aerodrome Classification**

3263(1) MOD Aerodromes **shall** be classified in order to define operational and safeguarding requirements.

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Aerodrome Classification

1. MOD Aerodromes **should** be classified¹ by Front Line Commands (FLCs) as follows:

Military Emergency Diversion Aerodrome (MEDA)

a. MEDAs **should** be operated on a continuous basis. They **should** be equipped with ground facilities, engineering systems and safety services and provide facilities for the handling of all types of UK Military Air System, as follows:

(1) A minimum Runway length of 7000 ft and Manoeuvring Area capable of supporting the landing techniques and operating requirements of any type of Air System.

(2) Navigation, approach services, appropriate radio (including Very High Frequency (VHF) / Ultra High Frequency (UHF) emergency frequencies) and radar approach aids.

(3) Fire and Crash Rescue **should** be maintained at a minimum level as detailed in DSA02 DFSR².

(4) Medical Cover. FLCs **should** ensure that emergency medical cover is available to provide an immediate response; the level of response **should** be proportionate to the Aerodrome's location, flying activity being conducted and the Air Systems involved. For a MEDA the minimum cover **should** be an aerodrome ambulance, driver and appropriately trained medical orderly at immediate readiness on Unit. An aviation medicine trained medical officer / civilian medical practitioner **should** be immediately contactable by phone or pager to provide urgent aviation medicine and specialist advice in support of the emergency medical services; they **should** be able to attend the airfield within 2 hours.

b. FLCs **should** define the process for transfer of MEDA commitment, in the event that the nominated MEDA Aerodrome is no longer able to satisfy the requirements.

c. Navigation and Approach Services and Engineering facilities provided by MEDAs may be reduced from 0200 (local) to 0730 (local) on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and from 1730 (local) on Friday until 0730 (local) Monday. These reductions **should** provide no less than:

(1) Navigation and Approach Services. A minimum handling capacity of 6 Air Systems per hour, ie one Air System every 10 minutes.

¹ Refer to RA 1010 - Head of Establishment (HoE) – Aviation Responsibilities - where site, establishment or bases are referred to as Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 classification; this enables the HoE to meet MRP compliance in line with RA 1026 – Aerodrome Operator and Aerodrome Supervisor (Recreational Flying) Roles and Responsibilities including Aerodrome and Helicopter Landing Site Assurance Requirements. The use of 'Tier' does not affect the aerodrome classification in this RA.

² Refer to DSA02 DFSR: Defence Aerodrome Rescue and Fire Fighting Regulations.

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(2) Engineering Support. Air System marshalling and parking only. There will be no facilities for turn round or rectification of diverted Air Systems.

Extended Hours Aerodromes

d. Extended Hours Aerodromes, in addition to operating to FLC requirements, **should** have extended operating hours to meet pre-booked diversion commitments when unit requirements have ceased. Operating hours **should** be as follows:

- (1) From 0800 (local) to 2359 (local) Monday to Thursday.
- (2) From 0800 (local) to 1800 (local) Friday.

e. They **should** have ground facilities, engineering systems and safety services as follows:

- (1) A Runway, Manoeuvring Area and technical services able to serve the requirements of Air Systems utilizing the Aerodrome as a pre-booked diversion.
- (2) VHF / UHF communications and radio and / or radar approach aids to meet their operational role.
- (3) Navigation and Approach Services. A minimum handling capacity to meet the pre-booked diversion commitment.
- (4) Fire and Crash Rescue maintained at the published station level in accordance with (iaw) DSA02 DFSR.
- (5) Medical Cover. FLCs **should** ensure that emergency medical cover is available to provide an immediate response; the level of response **should** be proportionate to the Aerodrome's location, flying activity being conducted and the Air Systems involved. An aviation medicine trained medical officer / civilian medical practitioner **should** be immediately contactable by phone or pager to provide urgent aviation medicine and specialist advice in support of the emergency medical services: they **should** be able to attend the airfield within 2 hours.
- (6) Engineering Support. Air System marshalling and parking only. There will be no additional facilities ie forward-firing weapon slots, Hardened Air System Shelter parking, hangarage, turn round or rectification of diverted Air System unless previously agreed.

Temporary Reduction in Extended Hours Capability

f. In exceptional circumstances, Extended Hours Aerodromes can apply for a temporary cessation of Extended Hours status. FLCs **should** define the process for reduction in extended hours capability.

Standard Aerodromes

g. Standard Aerodromes **should** be operated to a FLC requirement. They **should** be equipped with VHF / UHF communications and radio and / or radar approach aids to meet their operational role. FLCs **should** provide orders for Standard Aerodromes under their command; these orders **should** cover:

- (1) Operating Hours.
- (2) Runway and Manoeuvring Area details.
- (3) Fire and Crash Rescue maintained at the published station level iaw DSA02 DFSR.
- (4) Medical Cover. FLCs **should** ensure that emergency medical cover is available to provide an immediate response; the level of response **should** be proportionate to the Aerodrome's location, flying activity being conducted and the Air Systems involved. An aviation medicine trained medical officer / civilian medical practitioner **should** be immediately contactable by phone or pager to provide urgent aviation

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medicine and specialist advice in support of the emergency medical services: they **should** be able to attend the airfield within 2 hours.

- (5) Engineering Support.

Miscellaneous Aerodromes

h. Miscellaneous Aerodromes **should** be those at which the flying role requires a lesser scale of VHF / UHF communications and approach aids than is specified for Standard Aerodromes, eg Relief Landing Grounds. FLCs **should** provide orders for Miscellaneous Aerodromes under their command where they differ from Standard Aerodromes. These orders **should** be safety managed iaw RA 1200³, and **should**, as a minimum, cover:

- (1) Operating Hours.
- (2) Runway and Manoeuvring Area details.
- (3) Navigation and Approach Services available.
- (4) Fire and Crash Rescue facilities.
- (5) Medical Cover. FLCs **should** ensure that emergency medical cover is available to provide an immediate response; the level of response **should** be proportionate to the Aerodrome's location, flying activity being conducted and the Air Systems involved.
- (6) Engineering Support.

Tactical / Temporary Aerodromes

i. Tactical / Temporary Aerodromes **should** be those defined as a natural, semi-prepared or prefabricated strip with surface, slope, dimensions, load bearing capacity and clearance from obstruction sufficient to allow Air Systems to operate safely in specified weather conditions. Full criteria and operating requirements for each category of tactical / temporary Aerodrome are detailed in RA 3550⁴.

Rotary Wing Permanent Bases

j. The categorization of rotary wing permanent base Movement Areas **should** be by 'Performance Class' of the design helicopter as detailed in RA 3530(3)⁵.

Domestic Helicopter Landing Sites

k. Full criteria and requirements for each category are detailed in RA 3531(9)⁶.

2. All classifications of military Aerodrome **should** remain open during notified operating hours except in the following circumstances:

- a. For periods or under conditions agreed by the appropriate Command and published in a Notice to ►Aviation.◄
- b. When the Aerodrome is unfit for the safe operation of Air Systems.

3. When it is decided that the Aerodrome is to be closed, Units **should** take the following actions, where relevant:

- a. Notify all Air Systems under the control of the unit.
- b. Notify the following authorities:
 - (1) Distress and Diversion (D&D) Cell.
 - (2) The Air System operating authorities concerned.
 - (3) The Air Traffic Control Centre (ATCC) controller, if appropriate.

³ Refer to RA 1200 – Air Safety Management.

⁴ Refer to RA 3550 – Temporary Landing Zone.

⁵ Refer to RA 3530(3): Permanent Helicopter Landing Sites – Helicopter Performance Class.

⁶ Refer to RA 3531(9): Domestic Helicopter Landing Site.

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- c. Notify all sections associated with flying.
- d. Ensure any diversion commitments are cancelled.

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4. **Medical Cover.** AP1269 Lflt 12-08⁷ is to be used to determine proportionate medical cover. It provides a framework for the requirement to undertake a medical risk assessment to determine the level of medical cover required at each location.

⁷ Refer to AP 1269 – The RAF Manual of Medical Administration, Lflt 12-08 – Guidance on the Standards of Medical Cover for Military Aerodromes.