

## RA 2306 - Authorization of Flights

### Rationale

Authorization is the authority given to an Aircraft Commander to fly a particular Air System on a specified mission or duty. In the course of normal operations a disregard for the direction that is implicit within Authorization may increase the Risk to Life to a level that is not As Low As Reasonably Practicable and Tolerable. This Regulation provides Aviation Duty Holders (ADH) and Accountable Managers (Military Flying) (AM(MF)) with an immediate level of Assurance and direction.

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2306(1) All flights by UK Military Air Systems **shall** be Authorized.

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#### Authorization of Flights

1. ADH and AM(MF) **should** publish, by appointment, those personnel who may delegate powers of Authorization<sup>1</sup>◀.
2. ADH and AM(MF) **should** promulgate lists of individuals who have powers of Authorization by name or appointment and any limitations that apply. Authorizing Officers **should** receive Terms of Reference detailing their Responsibilities.
3. ▶ **Cross-Boundary Authorization.** Powers of Authorization **should not** transfer across ADH or AM(MF) boundaries unless endorsed by both the losing and gaining ADHs or AM(MF)s and promulgated as such in accordance with para 2. The sortie Authorization record **should** remain with the ADH or AM(MF) organization operating the Air System.
4. ADH and AM(MF) **should** ensure Authorizing Officers have completed and maintain currency for the MAA Centre of Air Safety Training Flying Authorizer's Course<sup>2</sup>.◀
5. ADH and AM(MF) **should** detail in orders the processes to be followed for the Authorization of flights.
6. **Duties of the Authorizing Officer.** The Authorizing Officer **should** as a minimum:
  - a. Detail the Aircraft Commander, and if applicable, the Formation Leader.
  - b. Ensure that the Aircraft Commander, and / or the Formation Leader ▶◀ understand the aims of the tasked mission or duty.
  - c. Ensure that the Aircraft Commander, and if applicable, the Formation Leader is capable of carrying out their Responsibilities as detailed in these Regulations or other applicable directives or orders issued by a subordinate authority.
  - d. Ensure that the Aircraft Commander or Formation Leader has thoroughly planned their mission, alternate mission or duty.
  - e. Ensure that the crew or formation members are qualified, in current flying practice, and capable of executing the tasked mission, alternate mission or duty as planned without undue Hazard.
  - f. ▶ **Detail each member of Aircrew, and Supernumerary Crew and define their duties**◀ in the flight Authorization record<sup>3</sup>, before flight.
  - g. Accurately state in the flight Authorization record the nature of the planned duty or exercise.

<sup>1</sup> ▶ The power to delegate Authorization for Defence Contractor organizations **should not** be granted below post holder level.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to RA 1440 – Air Safety Training.◀

<sup>3</sup> Colloquially known as the Authorization sheet.

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- h. If necessary, alter the mission or crew, place further limitations on, or ultimately cancel the sortie.
- i. Ensure that all aspects of the Authorization are recorded in sufficient detail in an appropriate Authorization record.
- j. Consider the impact of any synthetic training conducted immediately prior to the flight on the authorized sortie content. ► **Particular attention should be given to the potential for cognitive errors and / or simulator sickness as well as** ◀ practice and simulated emergency handling.

7. **Methods of Authorization.** UK Military Air Systems **should not** be flown unless the flight has been authorized, normally in writing, and the Aircraft Commander has signified that they understand the mission or duty by initialling the appropriate Authorization record. Electronic Authorization **should** only be used where it is at least as robust as written Authorization; in particular it **should** be capable of immediate Audit and hard copy reproduction. Exceptionally, if an Authorizing Officer and / or Aircraft Commander is unable to carry out the procedure for written Authorization, verbal Authorization **should** be given instead. The Authorization record **should** be annotated to reflect the granting of verbal Authorization as soon as possible.

8. ► **Deviation from Authorization.** Where exceptionally, on the grounds of Aircraft Safety, or in the UK national or Service interest, an Aircraft Commander / Formation Leader undertakes a mission or duty not included in the pre-flight Authorization, the deviation **should** be within the constraints of these Regulations. The Aircraft Commander / Formation Leader **should** inform their Authorizing Officer or Supervisor of their actions as soon as possible and in any event, after landing. The Authorization record **should** be annotated to indicate the additional duties carried out and clearly initialled by the Aircraft Commander / Formation Leader so as to clarify under whose authority they were undertaken.

**Authorization Terminology**

9. Where codes specifying sortie content are used to abbreviate written Authorization, orders and instructions **should** specify the codes that may be used and the relevant decode **should** be displayed alongside the Authorization record.

10. For Trials sorties where a reference from the Trials Instruction is entered into the Authorization record, details indicating which part of the Trial is to be conducted **should** be entered separately on the Authorization record and a copy of the Trials Instruction made available at the point of Authorization. ◀

11. **Aircrew Capability.** Authorizing Officers **should** pay particular attention to Aircrew Competency and qualifications, and apply Aircrew fatigue management considerations when authorizing a flight.

12. **Day / Night Flying Considerations.** Unless prior arrangements have been made for Night flying, Aircrew **should** only be authorized ► ◀ if the Authorizing Officer is satisfied that ► **the Aircraft** ◀ will arrive at the destination before the end of evening civil twilight. Furthermore, where bad weather influences light levels, the Authorizing Officer **should** consider applying a greater Safety margin and stipulate the latest hour at which the ► **Aircraft** ◀ is to arrive at its destination.

13. **Meteorological Considerations.** The Authorizing Officer **should** assure themselves that due consideration has been given to meteorological conditions, and be prepared to adjust the sortie profile accordingly.

► **Authorization of Supernumerary Support Crew / Passengers.** ◀

14. ► ◀ The names of ► **Supernumerary Support Crew /** ◀ Passengers **should** be entered in the Authorization record, ► **or where impracticable,** ◀ recorded on Passenger manifests.

15. ► **Passengers should be categorized and authorized using the following categories**<sup>4</sup>:

- a. **Routine Air Transport Passengers.**

<sup>4</sup> ► Refer to RA 2340 – Supernumerary Crew, Supernumerary Support Crew and Passengers. ◀

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- b. **Tactical Passengers.**
- c. **Familiarization Flight Passengers.**
- d. **Air Experience Flight Passengers. ◀**

16. **Flying during Exercises.** ▶ When exercise practicalities render the Authorization requirements of this Regulation impracticable, a general 'exercise' Authorization **should** be given. As a minimum, the Authorization **should** include the period for which Authorization has been granted, the maximum number of hours or sorties to be flown and any additional limitations imposed on individuals or crews. ◀

17. **Flying during Operations.** ADH **should** stipulate occasions when operational requirements preclude explicit Authorization and how those situations **should** be managed. However, the Authorizing Officer **should**, where possible, follow standard Authorizing procedures.

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18. ▶◀

19. ▶◀

20. **Risk.** The key role of the Authorizing Officer is to be aware of the probability and impact of potential problems and to eliminate, reduce or control the Hazards involved through Risk Management and implementation of suitable controls.

21. **Self-Authorization.** Suitably qualified Aircrew may be granted powers of Self Authorization by an Approving Officer<sup>5</sup> with any limitations detailed on an appropriate certificate. Independent Authorization, rather than self-Authorization, is encouraged.

22. **Cross-Boundary Authorization.** ▶◀ Suitably qualified Aircrew, such as appointed Central Flying School or Standards Agents, may be empowered to authorize all flights ▶for◀ Air Systems on which they are qualified ▶and therefore may require cross-boundary Authorization. ◀

23. **Authorization Terminology.** In stating the nature of the planned duty, the ▶Authorizing Officer will◀ avoid ill-defined terms such as 'local flying'. Where Aerobatic Manoeuvres are implicit in an authorized duty (eg air combat, weapon delivery, etc) the term 'aerobatics' need not be added. ▶◀ As an overarching guide for the completion of Authorization of flights, it ▶ought to◀ be possible to reconstruct the nature, scope and boundaries of the authorized flight and task, including the constitution and specific duties of the crew, from the Authorization record.

24. ▶◀

25. **Aircrew Capability.** If any Aircrew member considers that the flight for which they have been authorized is in any way beyond their capabilities or qualifications, it is their duty to inform the Authorizing Officer or Aircraft Commander accordingly.

26. ▶◀

27. **Flying during Operations.** A tasking message may be taken as Authorization to execute an operational sortie. However, if a hard copy of the tasking message is received it ▶will◀ be kept for reference. Where practicable, ▶the◀ Authorization record will be completed after the sortie. This does not apply to operational training which requires full Authorization.

28. **Consideration of Synthetic Training Activity.** ▶ Synthetic training can give rise to cognitive and medical issues that may impact on the ability of crews to safely operate an Air System. These can be described by the following categories:

- a. **Cognitive Errors.** Aviation Accident investigations have suggested a potential for Aircrew to incorrectly make 'live' inputs to emergency systems during the conduct of simulated or practice emergency handling on an Air System in flight immediately after conducting the same exercise 'live' in a Synthetic Training Device. This cognitive phenomenon might be mitigated by appropriate Authorization, pre-flight briefing, crew composition and other

<sup>5</sup> The Defence Contractor Flying Organization equivalent is the Flight Operations post-holder.

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supervisory factors and therefore, will be considered during the Authorization process.

- b. **Simulator Sickness.** Some personnel may experience simulator sickness following synthetic training including virtual, mixed or augmented reality devices. Symptoms can include headache, eyestrain, dizziness or nausea. It is important that Authorizing Officers confirm Aircrew are not suffering from any simulator sickness prior to flight. ◀