



Ministry of Defence

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23 February 2022

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 27 January 2022 in which you requested the following information:

Please can you either provide or forward to me any information around the helicopter flights around Wattisham airfield in Suffolk, that a member of the public might be able to request.

I am looking to establish if there are any regulations or rules that should be adhered to in regards to the frequency and level of flights in addition to the noise levels.

I am looking to establish what recourse and what process is available to anybody should any of the regulations or rules be infringed or ignored, assuming there is some form of recourse available in the first place.

You further clarified your request on 27 January 2022:

I am additionally seeking guidance in relation to frequency, duration, noise and the rationale for the selected flying areas-eg almost continually over the same urban conurbations in preference to the abundantly available and much less densely populated farmland.

I believe it will be relatively straightforward to commence measuring height and noise but gathering data about frequency, duration and flying areas will only be worth collating if set against any rules governing these aspects.

Please can you either advice on these further aspects or point me in the direction of somebody who might be able to.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that the information in scope of your request is held and is below.

As your request did not specify an exact location or date, meaning we are unable to identify the exact airspace your query relates to, we have interpreted your request to cover general information on regulations for Helicopter flying.

The following extracts from the Joint Helicopter Command Flying Order Book contain relevant information in answer to your request:

Unless written authorisation to the contrary has been obtained from Commander Joint Helicopter Command, low flying may only be conducted within the confines of the UK Low Flying System and

along routes and in areas abroad which have been formally approved by the appropriate national / local authority for use by UK Military aircraft Air Systems.

For general flight safety, and to avoid unnecessary annoyance to the public, low flying should be conducted at the highest separation criteria consistent with any operational or training requirement. This should normally be no less 100ft for helicopters, or the separation criteria laid down in Delivery Duty Holder orders.

Normally, the minimum height for Joint Helicopter Command helicopters when low flying is 100ft Above Ground Level (AGL), however, low flying may be authorised to 50ft AGL to meet specific operational training requirements. Authorising officers are to ensure that this is kept to the minimum necessary to meet the training task and that the training requirement meets the necessity for flying below 100ft AGL. Tactical flying may be authorised down to ground level.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) you may find the following links regarding military flying useful:

[Military Aviation Authority - Regulatory Article 2330 - Low Flying](#)

[Military low flying - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. Following this, if you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Workforce & Operations Team
Army Policy & Secretariat