

NPA/25/27

Title of Proposal: 3000 Series

RA(s) or Manual Chapter(s): RA 3232 – Provision of Vectors to Aircraft conducting Radar to Visual Recoveries or Short Pattern Circuits below the Air Traffic Control Unit Terrain Safe Level

Organizations and / or business sectors affected: StratCom, 1Gp, 2Gp, JAC, Royal Navy

RFC Serial No: None

MAA Author

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MAA Supervisor

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MAA LegAd (if required)

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N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Cross-references to Other Documents or Relevant Sources

Other MRP Amendments: N/A

Service Inquiry Recommendations: N/A

AAIB Recommendations: N/A

Other Investigation Recommendations: N/A

Any Other Document: N/A

Feedback Notes for the Regulated Community

The Regulated Community are invited to offer feedback about the proposed amendment in the following areas:

- Air or Flight Safety impact
- Operational impact
- Errors or omissions
- Timescale for implementation
- Cost of implementation
- Amendment to internal processes/orders

- Resourcing the outcome of change
- (Contract amendments because of the change)

The format for feedback is available within a single Excel Template file on both internal and external MAA websites; it is important to use this format to ensure that your responses are considered and answered correctly.

Summary of Proposed Amendment

Objective: Update RA 3232 – Provision of Vectors to Aircraft conducting Radar to Visual Recoveries or Short Pattern Circuits below the Air Traffic Control Unit Terrain Safe Level, with focus on an clarification of Final Approach Vectoring Area (FAVA).

Changes made: Following stakeholder engagement, RA 3232 was updated to clarify for Air Traffic Controllers the regulation regarding FAVA and the associated limitations.

Impact Assessment: Nil.

Consultation Period Ends: 16 September 2025

The consultation period for this proposed amendment ends on the stated date. Please send your feedback, using the Response Form, via email to DSA-MAA-MRPEnquiries@mod.gov.uk

MAA Approval

Post	Name	Rank	Signature
DSA-MAA-Reg-DepHd	Redacted	Redacted	Redacted - Original Signed

RA 3232 – Provision of Vectors to Aircraft conducting Radar to Visual Recoveries or Short Pattern Circuits below the Air Traffic Control Unit Terrain Safe Level

Rationale

Radar to Visual recoveries (R-Vis) and Short Pattern Circuit (SPC) procedures may require Aircraft to be descended and vectored below the Air Traffic Control (ATC) Unit Terrain Safe Level¹. When Aircraft are deliberately descended below the ATC Unit Terrain Safe Level there exists a greater Risk of Controlled Flight into Terrain. This RA details the Controller Responsibilities regarding Air Traffic Service provision below the ATC Unit Terrain Safe Level.

Contents

3232(1): Provision of Vectors to Aircraft conducting Radar to Visual Recoveries or Short Pattern Circuits below the Air Traffic Control Unit Terrain Safe Level

Regulation 3232(1)

Provision of Vectors to Aircraft conducting Radar to Visual Recoveries or Short Pattern Circuits below the Air Traffic Control Unit Terrain Safe Level

3232(1) Controllers **shall** only provide vectors ► to Aircraft ◀ below the ATC Unit Terrain Safe Level ► in ◀ receipt of a Traffic Service ► and when conducting R-Vis recoveries. Descent and vectors **shall not** be given below a Final Approach Vectoring Area (FAVA), except when conducting a recognised Instrument Approach (Precision Approach Radar or Surveillance Radar Approach). ◀

Acceptable Means of Compliance 3232(1)

Provision of Vectors to Aircraft conducting Radar to Visual Recoveries or Short Pattern Circuits below the Air Traffic Control Unit Terrain Safe Level

1. Controllers **should** only provide vectors to a maximum of 500 ft below the ATC Unit Terrain Safe Level, as depicted by the Radar Vector Chart (RVC) or Surveillance Minimum Altitude Area (SMAA), excluding the FAVA, when ► an Aircraft in receipt of a Traffic Service is performing a R-Vis recovery, or a SPC or Practice SPC, and is within 10 nautical miles of the Aerodrome. In these scenarios, the Controller is not required to make reference to Responsibility for terrain clearance. ◀

- a. ► ◀
- b. ► ◀

► ◀

2. ► ◀

Guidance Material 3232(1)

Provision of Vectors to Aircraft conducting Radar to Visual Recoveries or Short Pattern Circuits below the Air Traffic Control Unit Terrain Safe Level

3. **RVC.** RVCs depict the lowest vectoring Altitude / Height in various sectors covering the normal operating range of the Surveillance System. The Altitudes / Heights specified provide a minimum of 1000 ft Obstacle Clearance or 2000 ft in a Mountainous ► Terrain. ◀

4. **Military Surveillance Minimum Altitude Chart (Mil SMAC).** Mil SMACs depict the lowest vectoring Altitude / Height in various sectors covering the normal operating

¹ ► SPC and R-Vis procedures are also covered in the Manual of Military Air Traffic Management. ◀

**Guidance
Material
3232(1)**

range of a military Surveillance System. The minimum Altitudes / Heights available within the SMAA sectors are normally adequate to permit vectoring of an Aircraft to the final approach of a published Instrument Approach Procedure, including Surveillance Radar Approach. However, there may be circumstances where further descent below the SMAA, either on the final approach Track, or while establishing on the final approach Track, provides operational flexibility. The area that provides this facility is known as the FAVA. The Altitudes / Heights specified in the SMAA sectors provide a minimum of 984 ft (300 m), rounded up to the nearest 100 ft, to provide 1000 ft Obstacle Clearance including in a mountainous area **Error! Bookmark not defined.** The Altitudes / Heights specified in the FAVA provide a minimum of 492 ft (150 m), rounded up to the nearest 100 ft, to provide 500 ft Obstacle Clearance².
► Therefore, Aircraft cannot be issued with a descent instruction below the FAVA Altitude / Height when conducting R-Vis recoveries. ◀

Draft for NPA

² Refer to CAP 777 – ATC Surveillance Minimum Altitude Charts in UK Airspace Policy and Design Criteria.