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SERA Implementation

Key UK changes

Key changes resulting from the implementation of SERA include:

Visual Meteorological Conditions (VMC)

Aircraft flying VFR in Class C, D or E airspace must remain 1500 m horizontally and 1000 ft. vertically away from cloud and in a flight visibility of at least 5 km at all times. The reduced minima for aircraft flying below 3000 ft. AMSL at 140 kts or less no longer apply. Aircraft flying in a Control Zone can still request a Special VFR clearance when they are unable to comply with the VMC.

The UK is seeking to retain the following VMC:

1. An aircraft flying within Class C, D or Class E airspace within the UK shall be deemed to have complied with SERA.5001 if the aircraft:
 - flies at or below 3000 feet above mean sea level
 - flies at a speed which, according to its airspeed indicator, is 140 knots or less
 - remains clear of cloud, with the surface in sight and in a flight visibility of at least 5 km
2. Paragraph (2) shall not apply to a helicopter that is air-taxiing or conducting manoeuvres in accordance with normal aviation practice.

Retention of the criteria has yet to be confirmed, as this differs from the SERA VMC. For more information see our [summary infographic \(including available air traffic services\) \(/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=4294972774\)](#).

Cruising levels

The semi-circular level system replaces the quadrantal system and brings the UK into line with ICAO standards applied elsewhere around the world. VFR and IFR aircraft are allocated different levels to fly at:

- IFR flights use whole 1000's of feet (e.g. 1000, 3000 etc. when flying eastbound, and 2000, 4000 etc. when flying westbound)
- VFR flights use the intermediate 500 ft. levels (e.g. 3500, 5500 etc. when flying eastbound and 4500, 6500 when flying westbound)

For VFR flights, compliance with the cruising levels remains good practice but is not mandatory.

VFR at night

VFR at night is permitted in accordance with SERA requirements. Aircraft leaving the vicinity of an aerodrome must maintain 2-way communication with ATC and file a flight plan. The process of 'booking out' is still accepted as an alternative method to filing a formal paper or electronic flight plan in certain circumstances. Similarly, abbreviated flight plans filed in flight are still permitted.

There are also more restricting weather minima:

- Minimum cloud ceiling of 1500 ft AMSL
- Flight visibility of 5 km, or 3 km in the case of a helicopter flying outside controlled airspace

- Maintain sight of the surface when flying at 3,000 ft AMSL or below
- Minimum height of 1000 ft (or 2000 ft if over high terrain) above the highest fixed obstacle within 8 km of the aircraft except when taking off or landing

Special VFR (SVFR)

A speed limit of 140 kts applies to aircraft flying under SVFR, which must also comply with the following weather minima:

- Remain clear of cloud and with the surface in sight
- Flight visibility of 1500 m, or 800 m in the case of helicopters
- Maximum indicated airspeed of 140 kt

Rights of way on the ground

Rules on overtaking and giving way are now less specific. Aircraft and vehicles overtaking other aircraft and vehicles can now pass on either the left or the right.