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Nr 13/04 02 Jun
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## **Guidance on the Use of Unlicensed Aerodrome Sites by Private Aircraft**

The following guidance is provided for pilots proposing to use an unlicensed site for an aircraft operation.

Article 5(4) of the Aerodrome & Visual Ground Aids Order (SI 334 of 2000) states :

*A private aeroplane or an aeroplane used by a flying club, when not in use for instruction in flying may unless otherwise directed by the Authority, use a place which is not licensed as an aerodrome or which is not prescribed under subparagraph (b) of paragraph (1) of this Article, provided that the pilot of such aeroplane shall*

- hold a valid pilot licence, other than student pilot licence,
- ensure that landing and take-off at such place can be effected without undue hazard to persons and property and
- obtain the prior permission of the owner or the occupier of that place.

*and such use shall not place the owner or occupier of that place under any obligation as to the facilities provided nor is any standard stated or implied in regard to any such facilities.*

1. It is the responsibility of the pilot in command of an aircraft to ensure that landing and taking-off at an unlicensed site can be undertaken safely and without undue hazard to persons and property.
2. A site visit by the pilot is recommended prior to undertaking any aircraft operations at the site and in particular it is recommended that the pilot should walk and then drive the full length of the runway.
3. The pilot should establish that there are no significant obstacles along the runway or within an area 30m either side of the runway centreline.
4. It is the pilot's responsibility to ensure that there is sufficient runway length available for take-off and landing and sufficient clear areas for the initial climb and final approach. For runways less than 800m in length it is recommended that the runway should be at least 18m wide, for runways greater than 800m long, this should be increased to 23m.
5. The ability of the aeroplane to take-off or land safely is affected by the condition of the runway surface. Due regard should be taken of runway slopes and undulations. In addition the surface should be smooth and free from loose and upstanding objects, depressions and ditches. Areas of standing water, deep depressions and ditches could possibly preclude operations on a runway.

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6. Pilots should be aware that long grass, wet grass, snow, frost or soft ground can add 25% or greater to the take-off run and may even prevent the aircraft reaching take-off speed. It may also lead to loss of control during the take-off roll and the touchdown and landing roll.
  7. The length of grass should not exceed 5 cm on the runway and 10 cm within the manoeuvring area.
  8. A runway is of no use to the pilot if its approaches, take-off climb surfaces or circuit area contain obstacles which may endanger aircraft. The runway selected needs to be such that trees, power lines, high ground, tops of houses, aeriels etc. do not obstruct the aircraft's final approaches and take-off paths.
  9. Caution should be exercised prior to operating on the field to ensure that there are no animals, persons or vehicles on the runway and that there are no birds likely to generate a bird hazard. A person may be required on the ground at the unlicensed aerodrome to ensure the above.
  10. It is recommended that the minimum requirements for visual aids at an unlicensed aerodrome should be a wind direction indicator and delineation of the area usable as a runway (i.e. runway edge, threshold and runway end markers).
  11. There is no requirement or obligation for unlicensed sites to provide rescue and fire fighting facilities and the pilot should therefore consider what contingency measures would need to be adopted for dealing with an aircraft accident.

Further guidance material is available in the Authority's Aerodrome Licensing Manual ALM 003 and in ICAO's Annex 14, Volume 1, "Aerodromes".

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