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# IRELAND

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## AERONAUTICAL NOTICE

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### **Helicopter Flights Carried out in Support of Aerial Fire Fighting Operations.**

In accordance with EC Regulation 216/2008 - Article 1,(2)(a), the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has deemed that the requirements of the Basic Regulation shall not apply to the conduct of flights carried out for fire fighting operations and that such operations are therefore a State activity which is to be regulated by the National Aviation Authority.

Accordingly, the Irish Aviation Authority, in pursuance of Article 7(2) of the Irish Aviation Authority (Operations Order) Order, 2006, (S.I. No. 61 of 2006), hereby directs that helicopter flights carried out for the purpose of aerial fire fighting shall be classified as flights carried out for the purposes of Aerial Work.

An Aerial Work operator is required to provide an appropriate Aerial Work Operations Manual, or supplement to an AOC Manual and the content of this Aeronautical Notice lists the information which must be included in such Manuals submitted by both initial applicants and current holders of Aerial Work Permits in respect of aerial fire fighting operations as follows:

- a) Flights shall not be made over or in close proximity to the congested area of any city, town or settlement nor any assembly of persons unless complying with the requirements of Performance Class 1.
- b) Flights shall be conducted by day under VFR only.
- c) A helicopter shall not approach closer than 500 feet to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure, other than those directly concerned with or affected by the conducting of a fire fighting operation, unless in accordance with the conditions as set out in a Low Flying Permit issued by the Irish Aviation Authority.
- d) Such flights shall not be commenced or continued unless the helicopter can alight without undue danger to persons or property on the surface in the event of a critical power-unit failure.
- e) Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment is to be worn on all aerial fire fighting flights, however, where the helicopter is operated in Performance Class 3, each occupant shall be equipped with the following:-
  - i) a helmet providing substantial head protection in the event of an accident.

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- ii) protective overalls or outer clothing manufactured in a fire-retardant material.
  - iii) footwear of a substantial nature.
- f)** The helicopter shall be equipped with a safety harness for each aircraft occupant or, in the case where that is not reasonably practicable, with at least a safety harness comprised of a safety belt with one diagonal cross-over shoulder strap.
- g)** A flight shall not be commenced or continued when the prevailing meteorological conditions are:
- i) in-flight visibility less than 1,500 metres;
  - ii) cloud base below 600 feet above ground level;
  - iii) mean wind speed is in excess of 25 Knots; or
  - iv) precipitation restricts in-flight visibility,
- h)** Aerial fire fighting operations impose an exceptional workload on pilots. Accordingly, the Operations Manual must contain specific Flight Time and Duty Limitations as set out in IAA AN.0.58 applicable to fire fighting operations taking account of the following:
- i) a daily maximum duty period not exceeding 9 hours.
  - ii) a maximum total flight time not exceeding 5 flight hours per day.
  - iii) a maximum single fire fighting sortie duration not exceeding 2 hours and 30 minutes.
  - iv) a minimum rest period of 15 minutes between fire fighting sorties.
  - v) a minimum rest period of 30 minutes after any fire fighting sortie of 2 hours and 30 minutes.
  - vi) Operating crew on fire fighting duties shall be allowed at least one meal break of not less than 60 minutes during a Flight Duty Period of 6 hours or more.
- i)** Fire fighting operations shall be conducted in accordance with any conditions specified in the associated Irish Aviation Authority 'Aerial Work' and/or 'Low Flying' Permissions.
- Applications for Aerial Work and Low Flying Permissions must be submitted to the Flight Operations Department as soon as is practicable. Full details of the conduct of any fire fighting operations are to be communicated to the Irish Aviation Authority within 24 hours of the commencement of the operation.
- j)** Additional information required to be included in the Operations Manual is as follows:
- i) Contents of the pre-flight brief and debrief procedures, including procedures for ensuring inclusive briefing/debriefing of the helicopter operating crew, emergency services personnel and associated ground support staff.

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- ii) Fire fighting planning considerations.
  - iii) Minimum operating heights and lateral clearances from persons, vehicles, vessels and structures.
  - iv) Function and responsibilities of Observers/Aerial Work Task Specialists/Crew members when carried.
  - v) Non-patrolling operations such as maintenance.
  - vi) Aircraft incident/accident/overdue procedures.
  - vii) Minimum pilot qualification/experience requirements including role currency.
  - viii) Training and checking requirements.
  - ix) Aerial fire fighting techniques.
  - x) In flight communications procedures to be employed when two or more aircraft are engaged in a fire fighting operation.
  - xi) Fuelling procedures and safety precautions, including in-field procedures.
  - xii) Helicopter in-field security and maintenance arrangements.
- k)** The conduct of fire fighting operations shall be included in the Quality System and the Safety Management System.
- l)** The operator shall carry out a risk assessment of any proposed fire fighting operations prior to commencement and shall continue to review the associated risks throughout the operating period.



K. Humphreys  
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Irish Aviation Authority

