

**NOTICE
TO
AIR
NAVIGATION
SERVICE
PROVIDERS**

IRELAND

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NR R.02
ISSUE 03
DATE 17.07.15

Formation Flights in Controlled Airspace

The Irish Aviation Authority as the Competent Authority and National Supervisory Authority designated and nominated by the Minister in pursuance of S.I. No. 469 of 2003, European Communities (European Aviation Safety Agency) Regulations, 2003 and S.I. No. 95 of 2008, European Communities (European Aviation Safety Agency) Regulations, 2008 and as provided in S. I. No. 72 of 2004, the Irish Aviation Authority (Rules of the Air) Order, 2004 and, in accordance with Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 923/2012, SERA.3135 Formation Flights and SERA.4001(3) Contents of a flight plan, hereby prescribes the following:

In Controlled Airspace;

Aircraft shall not be flown in formation, except under the following conditions;

- 1) Prior approval to conduct the flight has been given by the Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) that has been designated for the airspace within which the flight will take place. The Aeronautical Information Publication for Ireland, section ENR 3.1, specifies the Air Traffic Services Airspaces and the relevant ANSPs.
- 2) By pre-arrangement among the pilots-in-command of the aircraft taking part in the flight.
- 3) One of the pilots-in-command shall be designated as the flight leader.
- 4) The formation operates as a single aircraft with regard to navigation and position reporting.
- 5) Separation between aircraft in the flight shall be the responsibility of the flight leader and the pilots-in-command of the other aircraft in the flight and shall include periods of transition when aircraft are manoeuvring to attain their own separation within the formation and during join-up and breakaway.
- 6) For State aircraft, a maximum lateral, longitudinal, and vertical distance between each aircraft and the flight leader in accordance with the Chicago Convention. For other than State aircraft, a distance not exceeding 1 km (0.5 nm) laterally and longitudinally and 30 m (100 ft) vertically from the flight leader shall be maintained by each aircraft.
- 7) All Air Traffic Control instructions and clearances shall be addressed to the flight leader.
- 8) All aircraft in the formation shall monitor the relevant Air Traffic Control frequency.
- 9) The callsign of the flight leader and the number of aircraft in the formation will be shown on flight plans. Item 18 of the flight plan 'Other Information' shall contain RMK/ and in plain language, the words "Formation Flight" and other relevant information regarding the nature of the flight.

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- 10) In making initial contact with the Air Traffic Control unit, flight leaders shall clearly state the number of aircraft in the formation; controllers shall ensure that this information is obtained prior to establishing an Air Traffic Service.
 - 11) Prior to a formation entering controlled airspace, controllers shall obtain confirmation on Radio Telephony that all aircraft in the formation are within the parameters as specified in paragraph (5) above. In the event that flight leaders report that they are outside these parameters, controllers shall instruct the formation to remain clear of controlled airspace and establish their intentions.
 - 12) Air Traffic Control Units with Secondary Surveillance Radar shall allocate a discrete code to the lead aircraft.
 - 13) Formations shall be considered non-Reduced Vertical Separation Minima compliant irrespective of the Reduced Vertical Separation Minima status of the individual aircraft types.
 - 14) During all co-ordination, traffic information and handover messages, controllers shall clearly state the number of aircraft in a formation.
 - 15) The formation leader shall immediately inform Air Traffic Control if the formation elements are unable to maintain within the required parameters as specified at (5) above. In such circumstances, controllers shall establish the extent of the formation so that instructions and/or information appropriate to the airspace classification and flight rules of the formation can be provided. Where necessary, additional discrete Secondary Surveillance Radar codes should be allocated to individual aircraft.
 - 16) For Instrument Flight Rules formations that are unable to maintain within the required parameters, the flight leader remains responsible for separation between aircraft comprising the formation until standard separation has been achieved between individual aircraft and each aircraft has been identified and placed under service.

**Chief Executive
Irish Aviation Authority**