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VFR Flights at Night in the Shannon FIR

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 S.I. No. 355 of 2008, Irish Aviation Authority (Aerodromes and Visual Ground Aids) Order, 2008 and in accordance with Implementing Regulation (EU) No 923/2012, as amended by Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1185, hereby prescribes the following:

1. VFR flights at night are permitted in the Shannon FIR under the following conditions:

- (1.1) Flights leaving the vicinity of an aerodrome shall submit a flight plan in accordance with EU Regulation 923/2012 SERA.4001(b)(6);
- (1.2) Flights shall establish and maintain two-way radio communication on the appropriate ATS communication channel, when available;
- (1.3) The VMC visibility and distance from cloud minima as specified in EU Regulation 923/2012 SERA.5001 Table S5-1 shall apply except that:
 - (1.3.1) The ceiling shall not be less than 1500 ft.;
 - (1.3.2) The reduced flight visibility provisions specified in EU Regulation 923/2012 SERA.5001 Table S5-1 (a) and (b) shall not apply;
 - (1.3.3) In airspace classes C and G, at and below 3 000 ft. above MSL or 1 000 ft. above terrain, whichever is the higher, the pilot shall maintain continuous sight of the surface;
 - (1.3.4) For helicopters in airspace class G at and below 3 000 ft. above MSL or 1000 ft. above terrain, whichever is the higher, flight visibility shall not be less than 3 km, provided that the pilot maintains continuous sight of the surface and if manoeuvred at a speed that will give adequate opportunity to observe other traffic or obstacles in time to avoid collision;

- (1.4) Except when necessary for take-off or landing, or except when specifically authorised by the competent authority, a VFR flight at night shall be flown:
- (1.4.1) Over high terrain or in mountainous areas, at a level which is at least 2 000 ft above the highest obstacle located within 8 km of the estimated position of the aircraft;
- (1.4.2) Elsewhere than as specified in (1.4.1) above, at a level which is at least 1000 ft above the highest obstacle located within 8 km of the estimated position of the aircraft.

2. Conditions for Night Operations at Aerodromes and other Locations.

- (2.1) Unless an Aerodrome or other Location has been approved for night operations, aircraft, rotorcraft, balloons or gliders are prohibited from taking-off or landing at night, except;
- (2.1.1) Where an emergency landing is necessary to ensure safety.
- (2.1.2) The aerodrome or location has been licensed or otherwise prescribed for night operations by the Authority.

Chief Executive
Irish Aviation Authority

The notes hereunder are for information purposes only and do not form part of this direction.

Note 1; Regulation (EU) 923/2012, (SERA) Art 2.97 defines night as;

“...the hours between the end of evening civil twilight and the beginning of morning civil twilight. Civil twilight ends in the evening when the centre of the sun’s disc is 6 degrees below the horizon and begins in the morning when the centre of the sun’s disc is 6 degrees below the horizon...”

The times for evening civil twilight and morning civil twilight can be found in AIP Ireland Gen 2.7.

Note 2; ATC Units may impose a limit on the number of simultaneous VFR flights at night in a control zone, to ensure that IFR and VFR traffic can be managed in a safe manner.

Note 3; Pilot licensing qualifications and aircraft equipage requirements must be met before undertaking a VFR flight at night.

Note 4; Aeronautical Notice R.02 has been withdrawn; therefore, Special VFR at Night is no longer permitted.