

Amendment of Rule 5 of the UK Rules of the Air 1996

Low flying

5 (1) Prohibitions to be observed

(a) An aircraft shall comply with the low flying prohibitions set out in paragraph (2) subject to the low flying exemptions set out in paragraph (3).

(b) Where an aircraft is flying in circumstances such that more than one of the low flying prohibitions apply it must fly at the greatest height required by any of the applicable prohibitions.

(2) The low flying prohibitions

(a) *Failure of power unit*

An aircraft shall not be flown below such height as would enable it, in the event of a power unit failure, to make an emergency landing without causing danger to persons or property on the surface.

(b) *The 500 feet rule*

Except with the permission in writing of the CAA, an aircraft shall not be flown closer than 500 feet to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure.

(c) *The 1000 feet rule*

Except with the permission in writing of the CAA, an aircraft flying over a congested area of a city town or settlement shall not fly below a height of 1,000 feet above the highest fixed obstacle within a horizontal radius of 600 metres of the aircraft.

(d) *The land clear rule*

An aircraft flying over a congested area of a city town or settlement shall not fly below such height as will permit, in the event of a power unit failure, the aircraft to land clear of the congested area.

(e) *Flying over open air assemblies*

Except with the permission in writing of the CAA, an aircraft shall not fly over an organised open-air assembly of more than 1,000 persons below:

- (i) a height of 1,000 feet, or
- (ii) such height as will permit, in the event of a power unit failure, the aircraft to alight clear of the assembly,

whichever is the higher.

(f) Landing and taking off near open air assemblies

An aircraft shall not land or take-off within 1,000 metres of an organised open-air assembly of more than 1,000 persons, except

- (i) at an aerodrome, in accordance with procedures notified by the CAA, or
- (ii) at a landing site other than an aerodrome, in accordance with procedures notified by the CAA and with the written permission of the organiser of the assembly.

(3) Exemptions from the low flying prohibitions

(a) Landing and taking off

- (i) Any aircraft shall be exempt from any low flying prohibition in so far as it is flying in accordance with normal aviation practice for the purpose of taking off from, landing at or practising approaches to landing at or checking navigational aids or procedures at a Government or licensed aerodrome.
- (ii) Any aircraft shall be exempt from the 500 feet rule when landing and taking-off in accordance with normal aviation practice.

(b) Captive balloons and kites

None of the low flying prohibitions shall apply to any captive balloon or kite.

(c) *Special VFR clearance and notified routes*

- (i) Any aircraft shall be exempt from the 1000 feet rule when flying in a control zone under a special VFR clearance issued by the appropriate air traffic service unit, or when operating in accordance with the procedures notified for the route being flown.
- (ii) When flying in accordance with this exemption landings may not be made at other than a licensed or Government aerodrome, unless the permission of the CAA has been obtained.

(d) *Balloons and helicopters over congested areas*

- (i) A balloon shall be exempt from the 1000 feet rule when landing because it is becalmed.
- (ii) Any helicopter flying shall be exempt from the land clear rule.

(e) *Police air operator's certificate*

Any aircraft flying in accordance with the terms of a police air operator's certificate shall be exempt from the 500 feet rule, the 1000 feet rule, the prohibition on flying over open air assemblies and the prohibition on landing and taking off near open air assemblies.

(f) *Flying displays etc*

An aircraft taking part in a flying display, air race or contest shall be exempt from the 500 feet rule when within a horizontal distance of 1,000 metres of the gathering of persons assembled to witness the event.

(g) *Glider hill soaring*

A glider when hill-soaring shall be exempt from the 500 feet rule.

(h) *Picking up and dropping at an aerodrome*

Any aircraft picking up or dropping tow ropes, banners or similar articles at an aerodrome shall be exempt from the 500 feet rule.

(i) *Manoeuvring helicopters*

- (i) A helicopter shall be exempt from the 500 feet rule when conducting manoeuvres in accordance with normal aviation practice, within the boundaries of a licensed or Government aerodrome, or at other sites with the permission of the CAA.
- (ii) When flying in accordance with this exemption the helicopter must not be operated closer than 60 metres to persons, vessels vehicles or structures located outside the aerodrome or site.

(j) *Dropping articles with CAA permission*

- (i) Any aircraft shall be exempt from the 500 feet rule when flying in accordance with article 56(3)(f) of the Order, and
- (ii) Any aircraft shall be exempt from the 500 feet rule when flying in accordance with an aerial application certificate issued by the CAA under article 58 of the Order.