

AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR P 067/2014

UNITED KINGDOM



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Date Of Publication

10 July 2014

Subject

Safety

Cancellation

AIC P 021/2011



TALL STRUCTURES – PROMULGATION AND VISUAL CONSPICUITY

- 1 In accordance with the ICAO standards, tall structures in the UK are promulgated within the Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) En Route Section (ENR) at 5.4 (Air Navigation Obstacles – En-Route). Significantly, the AIP ENR section only lists structures that have a height of 100 m (300 ft) above ground level (agl) or more. Further, such structures are then charted on the UK 1:500,000 and 1:250,000 series VFR charts produced by NATS on behalf of the CAA.
- 2 This means that in the UK, unless detailed within Aerodrome Section of the AIP, structures of a height of less than 100 m (300 ft) agl will not routinely be promulgated for civil aviation purposes. It follows that uncharted structures, some as high as 299 ft agl, could be encountered anywhere in the UK FIRs. This, coupled with current Government policy in promoting renewable energy initiatives, means that there is an increasing number of wind turbines and anemometer masts (both onshore and offshore) being erected that will not be charted.
- 3 Moreover, whilst anemometer masts in particular are often difficult to acquire visually, unless there is an aerodrome safeguarding issue, aviation warning lighting and/or markings on any tall structure only becomes legally mandated for structures of a height of 150 m (491 ft) agl or more. Nevertheless, any aviation stakeholder (eg a local aerodrome operator or airspace user) that considered a particular structure to be a significant navigational hazard could make a case for it to be lit and/or marked for aviation purposes to increase its visual conspicuity¹. The request (as opposed to mandate) for such lighting and/or marking would need to be negotiated with the owner of the structure or, if at the planning stage, the relevant planning authority.

***Note:** ¹Low intensity lighting is unlikely to provide much in the way of increasing the conspicuity of a mast during daylight. Perhaps a better way to increase the daytime conspicuity of structures such as anemometer masts would be the use of marker balls on the guy ropes or the use of dayglo/reflective markers.*
- 4 If asked for comment, it would be unlikely that the CAA would have any fundamental issue associated with an appropriate aviation stakeholder's case for lighting / marking of any structure that could reasonably be considered to be a significant hazard. To that end, in respect of any aerodrome-specific safeguarding issue, all parties should be aware that it is the aerodrome operators / licensees that hold associated safeguarding responsibility and it is for them to provide what the CAA acknowledges to be expert aerodrome-specific comment for the planning authority or other interested parties.
- 5 Additional detail on the aviation lighting requirement associated with tall structures is available with CAA Policy Statements, 'Lighting of En-Route Obstacles and Onshore Wind Turbines' and 'The Lighting of Wind Turbine Generators in United Kingdom Territorial Waters', available at:
<http://www.caa.co.uk/application.aspx?catid=33&pagetype=65&appid=11&mode=list&type=sercat&id=69>

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