ENR 1.2 VISUAL FLIGHT RULES

1 VFR Flight

1.1 VFR flights shall be conducted so that the aircraft is flown in conditions of visibility and distance from clouds equal to or greater than those specified in Table 1.

Table 1

(See Paragraph 1.1)

Altitude Band (Note 1)	Airspace Class	Flight Visibility	Distance from Cloud
At and above 3050 m (10000 ft) amsl	A B C D E F G (Note 2)	8 km	1500 m horizontally 300 m (1000 ft) vertically
Below 3050 m (10000 ft) amsl and above 900 m (3000 ft) amsl, or above 300 m (1000 ft) above terrain, whichever is the higher.	A B C D E F G (Note 2)	5 km	1500 m horizontally 300 m (1000 ft) vertically
At and below 900 m (3000 ft) amsl, or 300 m (1000 ft) above terrain, whichever is the higher	A B C D E (Note 2)	5 km	1500 m horizontally 300 m (1000 ft) vertically
	F G	5 km (Note 3)	Clear of cloud and with the surface in sight

***Note 1: Or** if, any aircraft which is not a helicopter, at 3000 ft amsl or below and flying by day only at 140 KIAS or less:*

Clear of Cloud and with the surface in sight in a Flight Visibility of at least 5 km.

***Note 2: Or** if a Helicopter and flying by day at 3000 ft amsl or below:*

Clear of Cloud and with the surface in sight in a Flight Visibility of at least 1500 m.

***Note 3:** Flight visibilities reduced to not less than 1500 m are permitted for flights operating:*

(a) at speeds of 140 KIAS or less to give adequate opportunity to observe other traffic or any obstacles in time to avoid collision; or

(b) in circumstances in which the probability of encounters with other traffic would normally be low, e.g. in areas of low volume traffic and for aerial work at low levels.

1.2 For the purposes of an aeroplane taking off from or approaching to land at an aerodrome within Class B, C or D Airspace, the visibility, if any, communicated to the commander of an aeroplane by the appropriate air traffic control unit shall be taken to be the flight visibility for the time being.

1.3 The minimum heights at which aircraft may be flown are detailed at SERA.3105 Minimum Heights. For the purposes of SERA.3105, SERA.5005(f) Visual Flight Rules and SERA.5015(b) Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) — Rules Applicable to all IFR Flights, the following operations are permitted (ORS4 No.1124 Standardised European Rules of the Air – Exceptions to the Minimum Height Requirements):

(a) **General (SERA.5005(f)(2))**

(i) The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) permits, under SERA.3105 and SERA.5005(f), subject to the condition set out in sub-paragraph (ii), an aircraft to fly elsewhere than as specified in SERA.5005(f)(1) at a height of:

(1) less than 150 m (500 ft) above the ground or water; or

(2) less than 150 m (500 ft) above the highest obstacle within a radius of 150 m (500 ft) from the aircraft.

(ii) The aircraft must not be flown closer than 150 m (500 ft) to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure except with the permission of the CAA.

(b) **Approaches to Landing or Forced Landings**

The Civil Aviation Authority permits, under SERA.3105, SERA.5005(f) and SERA.5015(b), an aircraft to fly below the heights specified in SERA.5005(f) and SERA.5015(b) if it is flying in accordance with normal aviation practice and:

(i) practising approaches to land at or checking navigational aids or procedures at an aerodrome;

(ii) practising approaches to forced landings other than at an aerodrome if it is not flown closer than 150 m (500 ft) to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure; or

(iii) flying in accordance with a notified procedure or when specifically authorised by the CAA in accordance with SERA.5015(b).

(c) **Flying Displays, Air Races and Contests**

The Civil Aviation Authority permits, under SERA.3105, and SERA.5005(f), an aircraft taking part in a flying display, air race or contest to fly below 150 m (500 ft) above the ground or water or closer than 150 m (500 ft) to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure if it is within a horizontal distance of 1000 m of the gathering of persons assembled to witness the event.

(d) **Glider Hill-Soaring**

The Civil Aviation Authority permits, under SERA.3105 and SERA.5005(f) a glider to fly below 150 m (500 ft) above the ground or water or closer than 150 m (500 ft) to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure if it is hill-soaring.

ENR 1.2 VISUAL FLIGHT RULES (continued)

(e) **Picking Up and Dropping at an Aerodrome**

The Civil Aviation Authority permits, under SERA.3105 and SERA.5005(f) an aircraft picking up or dropping tow ropes, banners or similar articles at an aerodrome to fly below 150 m (500 ft) above the ground or water or closer than 150 m (500 ft) to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure.

(f) **Manoeuvring Helicopters**

(i) The Civil Aviation Authority permits, under SERA.3105 and SERA.5005(f) a helicopter to fly below 150 m (500 ft) above the ground or water or closer than 150 m (500 ft) to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure if it is conducting manoeuvres, in accordance with normal aviation practice, within the boundaries of an aerodrome, permitted sites detailed at sub-paragraph (iii) or, if the operator or pilot-in-command of the aircraft has the written permission of the CAA, at other sites, subject to sub-paragraph (ii).

(ii) When flying in accordance with this permission the helicopter must not be operated closer than 60 m to any persons, vessels, vehicles or structures located outside the aerodrome or site.

(iii) Permitted Sites

(1) Any helicopter landing site which is the main operating base of a PAOC or AOC operator.

(2) Any helicopter landing site used by an AOC operator for a helicopter A-to-A operation in accordance with the provisions of the operator's operations manual.

(3) Any helicopter landing site located at the premises of a CAA approved aircraft maintenance organisation.

(iv) In sub-paragraph (iii):

(1) 'AOC operator' means a person holding a valid air operator certificate issued by the CAA under Part 2 of the Air Navigation Order 2009 (other than a PAOC operator) or under Commission Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 of 5 October 2012;

(2) 'PAOC' means a person holding a valid air operator certificate issued by the CAA under Article 13(5) of the Air Navigation Order 2009; and

(3) 'A-to-A operation' means a commercial air transport or public transport helicopter operation starting and ending at the same place (as defined in Article 255(1) of the Air Navigation Order 2009).

(g) **Dropping Articles with CAA Permission**

The Civil Aviation Authority permits, under SERA.3105, SERA.5005(f) and SERA.5015(b), an aircraft to fly below 150 m (500 ft) above the ground or water or closer than 150 m (500 ft) to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure if it is flying in accordance with:

(i) Article 129(3)(f) of the Air Navigation Order 2009 (dropping of articles); or

(ii) an aerial application certificate granted by the CAA under Article 131(2) of the Air Navigation Order 2009.

(h) **Captive Balloons and Kites**

(i) The Civil Aviation Authority permits, under SERA.3105, SERA.5005(f) and SERA.5015(b), a captive balloon or kite to be flown at heights below the minimum height requirements specified in SERA.5005 and SERA.5015.

(ii) For the purposes of this permission, a captive kite is a kite that, when in flight, is attached by a restraining device to the surface.

(i) **Balloons over Congested Areas**

The Civil Aviation Authority permits, under SERA.3105 and SERA.5005(f), a free balloon to be flown below 1000 ft above the highest obstacle within a radius of 600 m from the balloon within the congested areas of cities, towns or settlements or over an open air assembly of persons by day if it is landing because it is becalmed.

(j) **Special Visual Flight Rules (VFR) Flight and Notified Route**

(i) Subject to sub-paragraph (ii), the Civil Aviation Authority permits, under SERA.3105, SERA.5005(c) and SERA.5005(f), an aircraft to fly below 1000 ft above the highest obstacle within a radius of 600 m from the aircraft within the congested areas of cities, towns or settlements if:

(1) it is flying on a special VFR flight; or .

(2) it is operating in accordance with the procedures notified by the CAA for the route being flown.

(ii) Unless the permission of the CAA has been obtained, landings may only be made by an aircraft flying under this permission at a licensed aerodrome or a Government aerodrome.

(iii) In sub-paragraph (i) a 'special VFR flight' means a special VFR flight conducted in accordance with Sections 5 or 8 of SERA.

1.4 Except where otherwise indicated in air traffic control clearances or specified by the appropriate ATS authority, it is not mandatory in the United Kingdom for VFR flights in level cruising flight when operated above 3000 ft (900 m) from the ground or water, or a higher datum as specified by the appropriate ATS authority, to adopt any particular cruising level system. Such flights are advised to adopt the table of cruising levels for IFR flights as given at ENR 1.7, paragraph 6.1.

ENR 1.2 VISUAL FLIGHT RULES (continued)

1.5 VFR flights shall comply with the provisions of ICAO Annex 2, paragraph 3.6, when operating in Class B, C and D Airspace. Flight Planning requirements and Air Traffic Control Clearances are detailed at SERA.4001-SERA.4020, SERA.5005-SERA.5025, SERA.6001, SERA.8015 and SERA.8020.

Note: *A Special VFR clearance may be requested without the submission of a filed flight plan. Brief details of the proposed flight should be passed to the appropriate Air Traffic Control Unit.*

1.6 ICAO Annex 2 and SERA precludes authorisation for VFR flights to operate above FL 290 where a vertical separation minimum of 300 m (1000 ft) is applied above FL 290. Therefore, for aircraft operating as General Air Traffic (GAT), VFR flights shall not be authorised within the London and Scottish UIRs above FL 290, as described in ENR 2.1.

1.7 For the purposes of SERA.5005(c) Visual Flight Rules, VFR flight is permitted at night (see ORS4 No.1125 Standardised European Rules of the Air – Visual Flight Rules (VFR) and Special VFR Flight at Night) in accordance with the following criteria:

(a) if leaving the vicinity of an aerodrome, a flight plan shall be submitted;

(b) flights shall establish and maintain two-way radio communication on the appropriate ATS communication channel, when available;

(c) The VMC visibility and distance from cloud minima as specified in SERA Table S5-1 shall apply except that:

(i) the ceiling shall not be less than 450 m (1500 ft);

(ii) except as specified in (v), the specified reduced flight visibility provisions shall not apply;

(iii) in Airspace Classes B, C, D, E, F and G, at and below 900 m (3000 ft) amsl or 300 m (1000 ft) above terrain, whichever is the higher, the pilot shall maintain continuous sight of the surface;

(iv) for helicopters in Airspace Classes F and G at and below 900 m (3000 ft) amsl or 300 m (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; and

(v) ceiling, visibility and distance from cloud minima lower than those specified in above may be permitted for helicopters in special cases, such as medical flights, search and rescue operations and fire-fighting.

(d) Night VFR flights in the United Kingdom may be flown below a level which is at least 300 m (1000 ft) above the highest obstacle located within 8 km of the estimated position of the aircraft subject to the conditions at paragraph (e).

(e) The conditions specified in paragraph (c) are that the aircraft is flown:

(i) at an altitude not exceeding 3000 ft amsl;

(ii) clear of cloud and with the surface in sight;

(iii) at a height not less than 300 m (1000 ft) above the highest obstacle within a radius of 600 m from the aircraft when over the congested areas of cities, towns or settlements or over an open-air assembly of persons; and

(iv) elsewhere than as specified in sub-paragraph (iii), at a height of more than 150 m (500 ft) above the ground or water, or 150 m (500 ft) above the highest obstacle within a radius of 150 m (500 ft) from the aircraft.

(f) The Civil Aviation Authority permits, under SERA.5010(b) (Special VFR in Control Zones), a special VFR flight within a control zone at night in the United Kingdom.

2 Special VFR Flight

2.1 Clearance for Special VFR flight in the UK is an authorization by ATC for a pilot to fly within a Control Zone although he is unable to comply with IFR. In exceptional circumstances, requests for Special VFR flight may be granted for aircraft with an all-up-weight exceeding 5700 kg and capable of flight under IFR. Special VFR clearance is only granted when traffic conditions permit it to take place without hindrance to the normal IFR flights, but for aircraft using certain notified lanes, routes and local flying areas see paragraph 2.2. Without prejudice to existing weather limitations on Special VFR flights at specific aerodromes (as detailed within the AD 2 Section) ATC will not issue a Special VFR clearance to any fixed-wing aircraft intending to depart from an aerodrome within a Control Zone, when the official meteorological report indicates that the visibility is 1800 m or less and/or the cloud ceiling is less than 600 ft.

2.2 Aircraft flying below the minima required for VFR flight (detailed in paragraph 1.1) using the access lanes and local flying areas notified for Denham, White Waltham, Fairoaks and Brooklands in the London CTR will be considered as Special VFR flights and compliance with the procedures published for the relevant airspace will be accepted as compliance with ATC clearance. Separate requests should not be made nor will separate clearances be given. Separation between aircraft which are using such airspace cannot be given, and pilots are responsible for providing their own separation from other aircraft in the relevant airspace.

2.3 When operating on a Special VFR clearance, the pilot must comply with ATC instructions and remain at all times in flight conditions which enable him to determine his flight path and to keep clear of obstacles. Therefore, it is implicit in all Special VFR clearances that the aircraft remains clear of cloud and in sight of the surface. It may be necessary for ATC purposes to impose a height limitation on a Special VFR clearance which will require the pilot to fly either at or not above a specific level.

2.4 A full flight plan, Form CA48/RAF2919, is not required for Special VFR flight but ATC must be given brief details of the call sign, aircraft type and pilots intentions. These details may be passed either by RTF or, at busy aerodromes, through the Flight Clearance Office. A full flight plan must be filed if the pilot wishes the destination aerodrome to be notified of the flight.

ENR 1.2 VISUAL FLIGHT RULES (continued)

2.5 Requests for Special VFR clearance to enter a Control Zone, or to transit a Control Zone, may be made to the ATC authority whilst airborne. Aircraft departing from aerodromes adjacent to a Control Zone boundary and wishing to enter may obtain Special VFR clearance either prior to take-off by telephone or by RTF when airborne. In any case, all such requests must specify the ETA for the selected entry point and must be made 5-10 minutes beforehand.

2.6 ATC will provide standard separation between all Special VFR flights and between such flights and other aircraft under IFR. However, pilots with a Special VFR clearance should note that they cannot be given separation from aircraft flying in the access lanes and local flying areas detailed in paragraph 2.2.

2.7 A Special VFR clearance within a Control Zone does not absolve the pilot from the responsibility for avoiding an Aerodrome Traffic Zone unless prior permission to penetrate the ATZ has been obtained from the relevant ATC Unit.

2.8 Because Special VFR flights are made at the lower levels, it is important for pilots to realise that a Special VFR clearance does not absolve them from the need to comply with the relevant low flying restrictions of SERA.3105 Minimum Heights and SERA.5005 Visual Flight Rules (unless permitted otherwise by the CAA). In particular, it does not absolve pilots from the requirement that an aircraft, other than a helicopter, flying over congested areas must fly at such a height as would enable it to clear the area and alight without danger to persons or property on the ground in the event of an engine failure and that a helicopter, whether flying over a congested area or not, must fly at such a height as would enable it to alight without danger to persons or property on the ground in the event of an engine failure. In addition there are special rules applicable to flight by helicopters over London (see AD 2.EGLL AD 2.22, paragraphs 9, 11 and 12).

2.9 For the purposes of SERA.5010(b) Special VFR in Control Zones, special VFR flight within a control zone is permitted at night in the UK FIRs. (ORS4 No.1125 Standardised European Rules of the Air – Visual Flight Rules (VFR) and Special VFR Flight at Night).

2.10 **Radio Communication Failure Procedures**

2.10.1 The procedures to be adopted by pilots experiencing two-way radio communication failure are:

(a) If the aircraft is suitably equipped, operate the Transponder on Mode A, Code 7600 and Mode C;

(b) If it is believed that the radio communication transmitter is functioning, transmit blind giving position reports and stating intentions;

(c) If, when radio communication failure occurs, the aircraft is not yet in the CTR, the pilot must in all cases remain clear even if Special VFR clearance has been obtained;

(d) If Special VFR clearance has been obtained and the aircraft is in the CTR when the radio communication failure occurs, proceed as follows:

(i) Aircraft inbound to an aerodrome in the CTR - proceed in accordance with Special VFR clearance to the aerodrome and land as soon as possible. When in aerodrome traffic circuit watch for visual signals;

(ii) Aircraft transitting a CTR - continue flight not above the cleared altitude to leave the CTR by the most direct route, taking into account weather limitations, obstacle clearance and areas of known dense traffic.

Note: *In (i) and (ii), if flying on a heading advised by radar, when radio communication failure occurs, resume own navigation and carry out the appropriate procedure described.*

In all cases, notify the ATC Unit concerned as soon as possible after landing.