

Aerodrome Safeguarding

Alert Notice 1

April 2021



Ref.: ICAO letter SP 74/1-21/22 dated 25 March 2021

Subject: Potential safety concerns regarding interference to radio altimeters

Action required: As indicated in paragraph 5 of the ICAO letter

CAST Technical Group are responding to this issue. A special task group comprising aerodrome safeguarders, CAA, and representatives of the telecoms industry will investigate and work to quickly find a solution, or procedure, that will enable potential interference to be safeguarded against. Anyone with the requisite CNS expertise who wishes to volunteer for this group, is requested to contact Matt Roberts Matt.Roberts@eastmidlandsairport.com as soon as possible please.

In the meantime, we can advise that the current situation in the UK regarding the introduction of 5G has given us more time to investigate the potential impact. The UK has adopted a different implementation strategy to other States resulting in a lower signal strength that may therefore have a significantly reduced impact on radio altimeters. Telecoms deployments in the band 3.8-4.2GHz will be restricted to private low power fixed wireless access systems, and public deployments by mobile network operators will be restricted to below 3.8GHz.

The CAA is currently involved in research to assess the impact of the signal on radio altimeters in cooperation with the MoD. This, in addition to where the UK is with the deployment of 5G, means we have more time to undertake these assessments.

Currently there is little evidence to suggest the deployment of 5G infrastructure in the UK will have a significant impact on the performance of radio altimeters. Both Ofcom, MoD and the CAA are involved in work to develop an understanding of the impact, if any at all.

Until we have a better understanding of the impact, aerodrome safeguarders are advised to ensure deployments are monitored closely for any associated interference and that any reported interference is escalated to the CAA and Ofcom.

If an aerodrome safeguarder has any residual concerns regarding a development, they are advised to respond to a planning application consultation from Local Planning Authorities for 5G installations and upgrades in proximity of the aerodrome as follows:

Informative: The International Civil Aviation Organization has raised concerns about the potential for 5G deployments above 3.6 GHz to cause interference to on-board aircraft altimeters. Should this occur, then there would be a significant flight safety issue. Should interference occur then we will request the telecommunications operator to suspend the use of this equipment while the issue is resolved. We appreciate all parties understanding in this matter.

It is important that this advice is included in the Officer's report. Where a Planning Authority proposes to grant permission against the advice of X Airport, or not attach conditions which X Airport has advised, it shall notify X Airport, and the Civil Aviation Authority as specified in the Town & Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosive Storage Areas) Direction 2002.

The applicant should be aware that the airport will act against anyone found in contravention of the Air Navigation Order ("Order"). In particular in contravention of the following provisions under that Order:-

- Part 10: 240: A person must not recklessly or negligently act in a manner likely to endanger an aircraft, or any person in an aircraft.*
- Part 10: 241: A person must not recklessly or negligently cause or permit an aircraft to endanger any person or property.*

ENDS