
Issued: 6.7.2017	Enters into force: 12.7.2017	Validity: Indefinitely
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Legal basis:
Aviation Act (864/2014), Section 57

Implemented EU legislation:

Modification details:
This regulation replaces the following aviation regulations, issued by the Finnish Civil Aviation Authority on 22 May 2006:
OPS M1-15, Flying below minimum flight altitudes on aeroplanes
OPS M4-4, Minimum flight altitudes to be used on helicopter flights.

VFR flights below minimum flight altitudes

1 SCOPE OF APPLICATION AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 General requirements for minimum flight altitudes are contained in the Standardised European Rules of the Air, SERA (*Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 923/2012 laying down the common rules of the air and operational provisions regarding services and procedures in air navigation and amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1035/2011 and Regulations (EC) No 1265/2007, (EC) No 1794/2006, (EC) No 730/2006, (EC) No 1033/2006 and (EU) No 255/2010*).
- 1.2 Flights below general minimum flight altitudes (SERA.5005 (f)) are only allowed on the conditions specified in this regulation or with a specific permit issued by the Finnish Transport Safety Agency.
- 1.3 This aviation regulation shall not be applicable to unmanned aircraft operations.

2 FLIGHTS BELOW MINIMUM FLIGHT ALTITUDES

- 2.1 Flying below minimum flight altitudes is allowed without a permit from the Finnish Transport Safety Agency under the following conditions:

- 2.1.1 High-risk commercial specialised operations

Flying below minimum flight altitudes specified in the Rules of the Air is allowed in specialised operations, when conducted under a specialised operation authorisation, as follows:

- a) In areas other than above congested areas of cities, towns and settlements or over an open-air assembly of persons, flights may be performed at an altitude required for the mission in compliance with standard operating procedures and the Operations Manual.

- b) On aerial photography and thermographic survey flights, flying below minimum flight altitudes is allowed in compliance with standard operating procedures and the Operations Manual. In this case, the permitted minimum flight altitudes are as follows:
1. in Helsinki noise abatement area, 150 m (500 ft) above obstacles on helicopters and 300 m (1000 ft) above obstacles on aeroplanes;
 2. in other congested areas of cities, towns and settlements and over an open-air assembly of persons, 75 m (250 ft) above obstacles on helicopters and 150 m (500 ft) above obstacles on aeroplanes;
 3. in areas other than those mentioned in 1 and 2 above, 30 m (100 ft) from obstacles on helicopters and 60 m (200 ft) above obstacles on aeroplanes.

2.1.2 Instruction flights

In the event that a training programme approved under a flight training permit includes instruction flights that require flying below normal minimum flight altitudes, those sections of the training programme may be performed below the minimum flight altitudes specified, outside congested areas of cities, towns and settlements.

2.1.3 Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS)

On HEMS flights and HEMS instruction flights conducted at the request of the Emergency Response Centre Administration in accordance with section SPA.HEMS (CAT) in Commission Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 laying down technical requirements and administrative procedures related to air operations (*Flight Operations Regulation*), flying below specified minimum flight altitudes is permitted in any area under approved company procedures, when necessary for performing the mission.

2.1.4 Search and rescue flights

On search and rescue flights conducted at the request of an aeronautical rescue coordination centre, aeronautical rescue sub-centre, maritime rescue coordination centre, maritime rescue sub-centre, air traffic control unit or the Emergency Response Centre Administration, flying below specified minimum flight altitudes is permitted in any area without specific permission, when necessary for performing the mission.

When flight instruction is provided for search and rescue operations, flying below specified minimum flight altitudes is permitted in accordance with the organisation's approved course programme, except in congested areas of cities, towns and settlements or over an open-air assembly of persons.

2.2 Flights for which Finnish Transport Safety Agency's permit is required

- 2.2.1 For purposes other than those listed in section 2.1 above, permission to fly below minimum flight altitudes must be sought from the Finnish Transport Safety Agency.

- 2.2.2 When applying for permission to fly below minimum flight altitudes, an operational safety review must be submitted as required in section SPO.OP.230 of the Flight Operations Regulation. The review must include a risk assessment for the operations, and an associated specification of standard operating procedures to ensure that there is no unacceptable risk of endangering persons or property on the ground. If hoist operations or sling load operations are performed, the specification must include an assessment of whether the aircraft performance is sufficient and its other properties suitable for the intended operations.

3 FLIGHT PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 Flights below specified minimum flight altitudes shall be performed without compromising the safety of outside persons or their property or causing unnecessary noise disturbance. Relevant air navigation service units shall be kept informed of flights below minimum flight altitudes, including where, when and for what purpose they are conducted.
- 3.2 On positioning flights to the task area, normal minimum flight altitudes must be followed. However, flying below minimum flight altitudes is permitted on positioning flights related to police surveillance duties or search and rescue (SAR) missions if the weather so requires.
- 3.3 Only persons necessary for the performance of the flight mission may be carried when flying below specified minimum flight altitudes.

Pekka Henttu
Director General of Civil Aviation

Päivi Metsävainio
Head of unit