

# FACTSHEET – DASR.139 AERODROME CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

## AIM

The Defence Aviation Safety Regulations (DASRs) require all Defence aerodromes<sup>1</sup> to be classified as Certified or Non-Certified, and states that this classification will be determined by the Authority. This factsheet provides insight into the criteria employed by the Authority to determine whether a particular aerodrome warrants certification.

## ESTABLISHING CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

The Defence aerodrome regulations, DASR.139 – *Aerodromes*, came into effect on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Unlike the superseded regulations (DASR.ADR), these regulations make provision for Authority certification of some aerodromes.

To determine which Defence aerodromes warrant certification, DASA explored the decision criteria employed by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), the European Aviation Safety Authority (EASA), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). Their decision criteria were then assessed for relevance to Defence, in terms of equivalence of operations and risk exposure. Where necessary, the criteria were tailored to meet Defence's unique aviation context. Finally, the relevant Environmental Commands were invited to review the criteria, to provide confidence that their particular operational context was accounted for.

Through this process, DASA established its own certification criteria. Summarised, a Defence aerodrome must be certified if:

1. there is a terminal instrument flight procedure<sup>2</sup> for the aerodrome<sup>3</sup>; or
2. there are regular<sup>4</sup> civil commercial passenger operations at the aerodrome; or
3. there are frequent<sup>5</sup> aircraft operations<sup>6</sup> at the aerodrome<sup>7</sup>; or
4. the Defence flight operations at the aerodrome are often inherently hazardous, well beyond normal civilian operations<sup>8</sup>, and the provision of a well-designed / maintained aerodrome is a key safety risk control.

**Note.** *If a particular aerodrome solely meets criteria 1, the Aerodrome Operator and primary Military Air Operators (MAO) may present a safety-based argument to the Authority, recommending that certification is not reasonably practicable in the circumstance.*

Defence aerodromes may also be certified at the request of an Aerodrome Operator. This might occur where an aerodrome did not precisely meet any of the above four criteria, but other safety hazards warrant the additional rigour of aerodrome certification.

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<sup>1</sup> Under DASR.139, the terms airport, airfield, airbase, land based or shipborne heliports are all considered appropriate when referring to an aerodrome. This was not the case under the previous DASR.ADR regulations.

<sup>2</sup> Excludes Airborne Radar Approach (ARA).

<sup>3</sup> In the shipborne heliport context, this is aligned to helicopter operations to ships in instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) (i.e., Level I).

<sup>4</sup> The term 'regular' will be further defined through investigation and consultation at each aerodrome identified with scheduled civil transport operations.

<sup>5</sup> A numerical value for 'frequent' is purposely not presented. A binary result (i.e. yes/no) is contrary to the requirements of the WHS Act to minimise risk so far as is reasonably practicable, particularly when international 'good practice' does not currently present any such number. Rather, the decision should be made on the basis of rigorous analysis of the risk exposure. For example, it would be difficult to argue against certification for an aerodrome that sees multiple flights on many days of the year.

<sup>6</sup> In the shipborne heliport context, this is aligned to whether the ship can embark helicopters or will see significant use even though it cannot embark helicopters.

<sup>7</sup> Defence, civilian and international military operations must be considered in the total number of operations.

<sup>8</sup> This may include activities such as formation departures and landings, slopping ground landings, airborne landing areas, emergency runways, arrestor cable operations, recovery systems, etc. These considerations will be explored with major users to understand the hazardous nature.



## APPLICATION OF CERTIFICATION CRITERIA - CURRENT AERODROMES

The certification criteria described in the previous section were applied to all identified Defence aerodromes in 2021, with assistance from the relevant Environmental Commands. The Authority then made a formal determination on which Defence aerodromes required certification under DSR.139 - Aerodromes Regulations. The list of aerodromes requiring certification is available upon request from DASA.

All of these aerodromes are required to achieve Authority certification before January 2026, per the transition program presented in Advisory Circular 004/2020.

## APPLICATION OF CERTIFICATION CRITERIA - NEW AND CHANGING AERODROMES

Where a new Defence aerodrome is proposed, the Authority will make a determination on whether certification is warranted. The Authority's determination should be sought by the sponsor early in the program, to ensure the aerodrome's design and construction is suitable to achieve certification (if required).

For current Defence aerodromes that are currently classified as Non-Certified, a decision to expand the aerodrome's operational use may invalidate that classification. Where marked changes to the operational use of a Non-Certified aerodrome are being considered, the sponsor should seek an Authority determination on whether aerodrome certification would be warranted.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

- DSR.139 Regulations:  
<https://www.defence.gov.au/DASP/Docs/Manuals/8000-011/DSRWeb/index.htm#15303.htm>
- AC 004/2020:  
[https://www.defence.gov.au/DASP/Docs/DSR-Documents/AA-Circulars/AdvisoryCircular004\\_2020-Transition-to-DSR-139-Aerodromes.pdf](https://www.defence.gov.au/DASP/Docs/DSR-Documents/AA-Circulars/AdvisoryCircular004_2020-Transition-to-DSR-139-Aerodromes.pdf)
- DASA Aerodromes Group Mailbox:  
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