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Civil Aviation Safety Authority

ADVISORY CIRCULAR
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Aerodrome manual

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our offices are located and their continuing connection to land, water and community, and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Artwork: James Baban.

Advisory circulars are intended to provide advice and guidance to illustrate a means, but not necessarily the only means, of complying with the Regulations, or to explain certain regulatory requirements by providing informative, interpretative and explanatory material.

Advisory circulars should always be read in conjunction with the relevant regulations.

Audience

This advisory circular (AC) applies to:

- aerodrome owners/operators
- aerodrome consultants
- the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).

Purpose

An applicant seeking to certify their aerodrome is required to prepare and submit to CASA an aerodrome manual that satisfies the requirements of the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (CASR) and the Part 139 (Aerodromes) Manual of Standards (MOS).

Once certified, the aerodrome operator must keep the aerodrome manual up-to-date, to accurately reflect the aerodrome's facilities and operating procedures.

This AC provides supplementary guidance on:

- developing an aerodrome manual
- maintaining the accuracy of the aerodrome manual
- accessibility of the aerodrome manual
- promulgating changes to the aerodrome manual
- procedural non-compliance.

For further information

For further information or to provide feedback on this AC, visit CASA's contact us page.

Unless specified otherwise, all subregulations, regulations, Divisions, Subparts and Parts referenced in this AC are references to the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR)*.

Status

This version of the AC is approved by the National Manager, Flight Standards Branch.

> **Note:** Changes made in the current version are not annotated. The document should be read in full.

Table 1: Status

Version	Date	Details
v2.0	September 2026	This version has been updated to improve regulatory alignment with Part 139 requirements, clarify CASA expectations for aerodrome manual management, and modernise guidance based on operational experience and stakeholder feedback. The following updates have been made in this version: • Updates to section 2.1 to clarify the purpose of the aerodrome manual as the primary controlled document. • Updated section 2.2 to strengthen guidance on organisational responsibilities. • Revised section 3.1 Aerodrome manual format to improve clarity regarding accessibility, usability and content structure. • Expanded section 3.2 by introducing additional examples of acceptable document control methods. • Updated section 4.1 to better align guidance with Part 139 MOS requirements. • Revised section 4.2 to simplify guidance and improve alignment. • Updated section 4.3 to clarify access arrangements and user guidance for the MAAT system. • Revised section 4.4 linking to subsidiary materials to clarify the use of supporting documentation. • Updated section 4.5 to clarify access requirements for personnel, contractors and other persons. • Enhanced section 4.6 by introducing risk-based review concepts, updating review triggers, and clarifying reporting timeframes. • Revised section 4.7 to improve clarity regarding amendment notification and submission requirements. • Updated Chapter 5 to clarify obligations relating to procedural compliance.
v1.1	July 2023	Editorial changes to highlight a number of additional published Advisory Circulars.
v1.0	May 2020	Initial release of this AC

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1 Reference material

1.1 Acronyms

The acronyms and abbreviations used in this AC are listed in the table below.

Table 2: Acronyms

Acronym	Description
AC	advisory circular
CAR	*Civil Aviation Regulations 1988*
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CASR	*Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998*
MAAT	Manual Authoring and Assessment Tool
MOS	*Part 139 (Aerodromes) Manual of Standards*

1.2 Definitions

Terms that have specific meaning within this AC are defined in the table below. Where definitions from the civil aviation legislation have been reproduced for ease of reference, these are identified by 'grey shading'. Should there be a discrepancy between a definition given in this AC and the civil aviation legislation, the definition in the legislation prevails.

Table 3: Definitions

Term	Definition
Part 139 of CASR 1998	Aerodromes

1.3 References

Legislation

Legislation is available on the Federal Register of Legislation website https://www.legislation.gov.au/

Table 4: Legislation references

Document	Title
Part 139 of CASR	Part 139—Aerodromes
Part 139 MOS	Part 139 (Aerodromes) Manual of Standards 2019

Advisory material

CASA's advisory materials are available at https://www.casa.gov.au/publications-and-resources/guidance-materials

Table 5: Advisory material references

Document	Title
AC 139.B-01	Applying for an aerodrome certificate
AC 139.B-02	Aerodrome personnel
AC 139.C-04	Aerodrome technical inspections
AC 139.C-05	Aerodrome reporting and validation
AC 139.C-16	Wildlife hazard management at aerodromes
AC 139.C-19	Aerodrome emergency planning
AC 139.C-26	Safety management systems for aerodromes
AC 139.C-27	Risk management plans for aerodromes

2 The aerodrome manual

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The aerodrome manual is the primary controlled document necessary for obtaining and maintaining aerodrome certification. The manual describes the aerodrome, how it is operated, how safety is managed, and how compliance with certification requirements is maintained. It also describes the aerodrome's infrastructure, operating procedures and safety management arrangements, and demonstrates how safe operational outcomes are achieved.

2.1.2 Applicants seeking aerodrome certification must submit a draft aerodrome manual to CASA. The draft needs to meet the appliable legislative requirements and be tailored to the aerodrome's facilities, operations and operating environment.

2.1.3 Following aerodrome certification, the aerodrome operator must ensure the aerodrome manual remains current. Whenever there is a change to aerodrome facilities, procedures or operations, the manual should be updated to reflect the aerodrome and its operating environment.

2.2 Purpose and scope

1.3.1 An effective management structure and a systematic approach to aerodrome operations is essential. The aerodrome manual should describe the organisation and the systems it uses. It is the primary reference document for recording the responsibilities of aerodrome staff, and relevant third parties. Each section should clearly nominate who has responsibility for, and specifically who carries out each of the tasks described.

2.2.1 The manual is required to contain, or refer to, all necessary information applicable to the size and complexity of the aerodrome, as mandated by the Part 139 MOS.

2.2.2 The aerodrome manual forms part of the aerodrome operator’s safety management system (SMS) or risk management process where an SMS is not required, and should describe how safety risks are identified, controlled, and monitored in accordance with Part 139 of CASR and the applicable Part 139 MOS provisions.

2.2.3 If responsibilities are attributed to other stakeholders, the aerodrome manual should clearly identify them.

3 Format and control of the manual

3.1 Aerodrome manual format

3.1.1 The aerodrome manual must be in a format that is accessible, usable and can be readily updated. The order of content is flexible provided the aerodrome manual includes all information required by the Part 139 MOS.

3.1.2 The manual should be written so that it is easy to read and understand.

3.1.3 The manual may be retained in printed form or in an electronic form, or a combination of these, provided it is conveniently accessible and usable by aerodrome personnel. Electronic information is to be clearly legible on all pages, including drawings and maps.

3.1.4 Regardless of the format used, the aerodrome operator should ensure the aerodrome manual remains accurate, readable and fit for purpose.

3.2 Document control procedures

3.2.1 As the aerodrome manual is a 'living' document, document control procedures are of paramount importance.

3.2.2 To ensure personnel have access to current information and comply with section 10.03 of the Part 139 MOS, the aerodrome operator must establish document control processes to ensure the manual is current, traceable and protected from unintended use.

Examples of acceptable methods include (but are not limited to):

- current version number (if a version number is provided)
- amendment history
- date of release for each section or page
- unique document management system numbering.

3.2.3 The aerodrome manual should also include a description of its amendment and revision process, specifying:

- the person(s) who may approve amendments or revisions
- the methods by which all personnel and organisations are advised of changes to the manual.

3.2.4 The manual should demonstrate how the aerodrome operator complies with applicable regulatory requirements.

3.3 Aerodrome manual controller(s)

3.3.1 As required by subsection 10.01(4) of the Part 139 MOS, the aerodrome operator is required to nominate a person, or persons, who are functionally responsible for the aerodrome manual, specifically for:

- reviewing
- maintaining
- amending
- controlling
- ensuring compliance with the format, content, retention and amendment provisions.

3.3.2 Persons with responsibility for the aerodrome manual are expected to be familiar with the procedures in the manual and the operational safety requirements at the aerodrome.

3.3.3 Although ensuring compliance with format, retention and amendment provisions are attributable to the aerodrome manual controller, the accountable manager is ultimately responsible for legislative compliance.

4 Developing an Aerodrome Manual

4.1 Aerodrome manual content

4.1.1 While Chapter 11 of the Part 139 MOS specifies information that must be included in the aerodrome manual, other regulatory provisions may also require information to be documented.

4.1.2 CASA has produced guidance material to assist aerodrome operators with developing an aerodrome manual that identifies and addresses all provisions the aerodrome operator should consider including in their aerodrome manual. Section 4.2 below provides further information and instruction.

4.1.3 Where a standard in the Part 139 MOS is not relevant to the aerodrome's operations, section 10.02 of the MOS requires the aerodrome operator to maintain a placeholder in the manual which records the following information:

- reference to the relevant Part 139 MOS provision
- the term "NOT APPLICABLE" or "N/A".

4.2 Sample aerodrome manual guide and template

4.2.1 A sample aerodrome manual guide and template[1] are available on the CASA website.

4.2.2 The sample aerodrome manual guide and template have been structured in a logical order and provide clear references to the legislative requirements. Alternate provisions which represent the various complexities of the operating environment and the scalable certification structure are also provided. Where procedures are prescriptive there is limited scope to deviate from the mandatory legislative requirements. Aerodrome specific procedures will require tailoring to reflect the uniqueness of the aerodrome's facilities and operations.

4.2.3 Aerodrome operators who adopt any of the sample aerodrome manual content should ensure they can demonstrate that they are operating in accordance with those procedures.

4.3 Manual Authoring and Assessment Tool (MAAT)

4.3.1 To reduce the administrative burden of producing and updating an aerodrome manual, CASA has developed an electronic Manual Authoring and Assessment Tool (MAAT) for drafting and ongoing manual revision. The MAAT is available as an internet portal.

4.3.2 Consistent with the sample manual, the MAAT provides a template that has pre-loaded text and guidance material which requires the aerodrome operator to populate unique information specific to their aerodrome's infrastructure and intended operations.

4.3.3 The MAAT is free to use. Aerodrome operators can obtain a login by registering through the CASA website.[2]

4.3.4 An online training program is provided which will take approximately 1 hour to complete.

4.3.5 Ongoing support for all MAAT users is available either via email at maat@casa.gov.au or by telephoning 131 757 (extension 7311).

[1] < https://www.casa.gov.au/operations-safety-and-travel/aerodromes/aerodrome-operations/creating-aerodrome-operating-manual>

[2] <https://www.casa.gov.au/regulations-and-policy/webform/contact-maat-coordinator>

4.4 Linking to subsidiary materials, documents, plans etc.

4.4.1 Where the Part 139 MOS explicitly states certain information is to be included in the aerodrome manual, this information must be included. The inclusion of this information in an Appendix is permissible.

4.4.2 The aerodrome manual may apply or adopt other information as subsidiary material, however the aerodrome operator must then comply with the subsidiary material, and it becomes part of the manual for purposes of review and update.

4.4.3 Chapter 5 of the Part 139 MOS contains aerodrome information to be published in the AIP and included in the aerodrome manual. This information therefore cannot be considered as subsidiary material.

4.4.4 Subsidiary materials may be maintained separately from the aerodrome manual, provided that:

- the aerodrome manual clearly references those materials
- the combined documentation demonstrates compliance with CASR Part 139 and the MOS.

4.4.5 Where subsidiary materials contain procedures or controls necessary to demonstrate compliance, CASA may, on written request, require the submission of subsidiary materials as part of the aerodrome manual approval process or ongoing oversight.

4.4.6 Subject to the minimum content requirements stated in Chapter 11 of the Part 139 MOS being met, and although not an exhaustive list, the following documents may be considered as subsidiary materials to the manual:

- wildlife hazard management plan
- safety management system
- risk management plan
- aerodrome emergency plan / emergency response arrangements
- low visibility procedures.

4.4.7 Subsidiary materials are to be:

- clearly cross-referenced in the aerodrome manual
- accurately maintained
- readily accessible
- reviewed in accordance with the aerodrome manual review requirements
- complied with.

4.4.8 When subsidiary materials are first introduced, an amendment to the aerodrome manual, annotating a reference to the subsidiary material(s), is required.

4.4.9 Before CASA can accept reference to subsidiary materials, the corresponding aerodrome manual amendment referencing the inclusion of these materials is to be provided to CASA within thirty (30) days of their adoption.

4.5 Accessibility

4.5.1 All personnel with responsibilities or duties identified in the aerodrome manual should have access to the aerodrome manual, or to the relevant parts of the aerodrome manual. Access should be provided to all personnel responsible for undertaking activities in accordance with the aerodrome manual.

4.5.2 Persons undertaking such activities who are not employed by the aerodrome operator should be provided with information from the aerodrome manual applicable to the activity they perform.

4.5.3 A copy of the aerodrome manual should be retained at the aerodrome. If requested, in writing, the aerodrome operator is to provide a copy of the aerodrome manual to CASA for inspection.

4.6 Review and reporting requirements

4.6.1 The aerodrome operator is responsible for ensuring the information documented in the aerodrome manual, and any subsidiary materials directly linked to the aerodrome manual, are an accurate representation of the aerodrome and its operating environment.

4.6.2 To ensure the aerodrome manual and associated subsidiary materials remain current, the aerodrome operator should review the content regularly.

4.6.3 The manual should be reviewed whenever there is a change to:

- legislation affecting aerodrome regulatory requirements
- published aerodrome information
- operating procedures, including the introduction of new procedures
- aerodrome facilities or infrastructure
- operations conducted at the aerodrome
- the organisational structure, personnel responsibilities or contact details.

4.6.4 Reviews should be conducted at intervals appropriate to the size, complexity and risk profile of the aerodrome.

4.6.5 An annual review is an acceptable means of compliance.

4.6.6 Confirmation, including evidence of the review of the aerodrome manual procedures that is conducted in accordance with the annual technical inspection, is to be provided to CASA within thirty (30) days of the operator receiving the report from the technical inspector.

4.6.7 Where an aerodrome manual validation is conducted and inconsistencies of the type specified in the Part 139 MOS are identified, a report should be made to CASA within thirty (30) days of the identification of:

- incorrect aerodrome information published in the AIP, included in a NOTAM, or reported to ATC (if applicable)
- any details in the aerodrome manual which are incorrect or are not current
- any procedure in use at the aerodrome, which is not in accordance with, or conflicts with, procedures in the aerodrome manual.

4.6.8 The records of each aerodrome manual review conducted as part of the technical inspection, or aerodrome manual validation process, are to be maintained for a minimum of three (3) years.

4.7 Amendments to the manual

4.7.1 Where a change to the manual is required, the manual must be amended, and the amendments published as soon as practicable.

4.7.2 When the manual is amended, the information that has changed in that revision of the manual must be clearly identifiable to the reader.

4.7.3 Changed information should be:

- shown in a different format to the unchanged information and include a reference to the date of change

or

- recorded in a table within the manual clearly articulating a written summary of each change and the respective date of each change

or

- clearly visible so that the location, nature of the change, and date of the change are identifiable.

4.7.4 The aerodrome operator should ensure that all persons who have responsibilities in the manual are made aware of any relevant changes.

4.7.5 Manual amendments are to be provided to CASA within thirty (30) days of the amendment being made. An aerodrome operator is required to provide CASA with:

- written notification explaining the change
- a copy of the changed part of the manual which clearly identifies the information that has changed.

5 Compliance with the aerodrome manual

5.1 General

5.1.1 Except where a deviation from a procedure is immediately necessary for the safety of aircraft, aircraft operations or individuals involved in aerodrome operations, the aerodrome operator must operate in accordance with the aerodrome manual (as accepted by CASA).

5.2 Deviation from procedure (non-compliance)

5.2.1 Changes to the aerodrome's operating environment may create circumstances not fully addressed by documented procedures. In some situations, a temporary deviation from a documented procedure may be necessary to maintain safety.

5.2.2 A deviation from the documented procedure may be permitted if a change to the procedure is considered necessary for the safety of aircraft, aircraft operations or individuals using the aerodrome.

5.2.3 If a deviation from a documented procedure occurs, the aerodrome operator should determine whether the deviation will be required on a permanent basis.

5.2.4 If the deviation will become permanent, the aerodrome operator is to amend the aerodrome manual as soon as possible to reflect the procedural change.

5.2.5 CASA must be notified of procedural deviations where required by CASR Part 139, the Part 139 MOS, or applicable reporting obligations (for instance safety reporting frameworks) or aerodrome manual procedures, irrespective of whether the deviation is temporary or permanent.