



ADVISORY CIRCULAR

AC 11-02v4.1

Exemptions against the CASR, CAR, CAO and MOS

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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:

- any person subject to a requirement or obligation under the civil aviation legislation
- persons affected by requirements or obligations under the civil aviation legislation that applies to another person.

Purpose

This AC provides guidance and information to persons requiring an exemption against the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation 1998 (CASRs), Civil Aviation Regulations 1988 (CARs) and Civil Aviation Orders (CAOs) under Subpart 11.F of the CASRs. This includes exemptions against Manuals of Standards (MOS) if referenced in the CASRs.

For further information

For further information, contact CASA's Advisory and Drafting (telephone 131 757).

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 Branch Manager Advisory and Drafting, Legal, International and Regulatory Affairs.

Note: Changes made in the current version are annotated with change bars.

Version	Date	Details
v4.1	September 2023	Further information added to the end of Chapter 2 about CASA's standardised process for reviewing and assessing exemption applications, including the fees associated with exemptions. Minor changes to sections 3.4 and 3.5, and chapter 5, plus the creation of a new section 3.6 to better bookmark guidance relating to the renewal of existing exemptions.
v4.0	June 2022	This revision updates the format of the AC and includes advice relating to exemption applications now being required to use an approved form. It also provides updated guidance regarding acceptable levels of safety.
(2)	August 2011	Minor machinery amendments.
(1)	December 2004	Minor machinery amendments.
(0)	July 2004	Initial AC

Contents

1	Reference material	4
1.1	Acronyms	4
1.2	Definitions	4
1.3	References	4
1.4	Forms	5
2	Overview	6
3	Application for a standard exemption	8
3.1	Relevant legislation	8
3.2	Who may apply for an exemption?	8
3.3	When to apply for an exemption	8
3.4	Where to apply for an exemption	8
3.5	How to apply for an exemption	8
3.6	Renewing an existing exemption	9
4	CASA consideration of application for standard exemption	10
5	Notification of decision to the applicant	11
6	Conditions on a standard exemption	12
7	Commencement, duration and publication of exemptions	13
8	Exemptions are not transferable	14
9	Revocation of an exemption	15
10	Exemptions in exceptional circumstances	16

1 Reference material

1.1 Acronyms

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

Acronym	Description
AC	advisory circular
CAO	Civil Aviation Order
CAR	Civil Aviation Regulations 1988
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CASR	Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998
MOS	Manual of Standards

1.2 Definitions

Terms that have specific meaning within this AC are defined in the table below. Where definitions from the 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 Regulations, the definition in the Regulations prevails.

Term	Definition
civil aviation legislation	means: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the CAR or CASR; or b. legislative instruments made under the CAR or CASR, such as a Civil Aviation Order.

1.3 References

Legislation

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

Document	Title
Part 11 of CASR	Regulatory Administrative Procedures – Subpart 11.F - Exemptions from provisions of these Regulations and Civil Aviation Orders

Advisory material

CASA's advisory material is available at <https://www.casa.gov.au/resources-and-education/publications-and-resources/guidance-material>.

Document	Title
AC 1-01	Understanding the legislative framework

1.4 Forms

CASA's forms are available at <https://www.casa.gov.au/search-centre/forms-and-templates>

Form number	Title
	Application - Exemption (CASR Subpart 11.F)

2 Overview

- 2.1.1 CASA can issue an exemption from most provisions of the CAR and CASRs under Subpart 11.F. This can include an exemption from a requirement in the CASRs to comply with a MOS or some other referenced document. CASA may issue an exemption either on application or on its own initiative.
- 2.1.2 CASA cannot grant an exemption against a requirement in the Civil Aviation Act 1988.
- 2.1.3 An exemption may be granted to a person or class of persons in relation to:
- a type, model or serial number of aircraft or aeronautical product
 - an operation
 - an authorisation
 - a combination of any of the above.
- 2.1.4 Subpart 11.F of the CASRs provides for two types of exemptions, standard exemptions and exemptions for exceptional circumstance. This AC deals predominantly with the process for applying for, assessing and issuing standard exemptions on application, and deals only in passing with exemptions issued on CASA's own initiative or in exceptional circumstances¹.
- 2.1.5 Words and phrases used in this AC have the same meanings as in the Act, CASRs and CARs. Readers seeking to understand the basics of Australia's civil aviation legislation are recommended to read [AC 1-01 Understanding the legislative framework](#).
- 2.1.6 CASA may issue a standard exemption on its own initiative. This might occur if there is an obvious flaw in the regulations and the only means of addressing this in the short term would be by exemption. In that case, CASA would normally seek to amend the regulations through the normal process, with a view to revoking the exemption.
- 2.1.7 Standard exemptions issued on CASA's own initiative are subject to the same provisions in relation to commencement, duration, revocation, publication, renewal and transferability as standard exemptions issued on application by a person.
- 2.1.8 CASA may also grant exceptional circumstances exemption on its own initiative in response to the exceptional circumstances.
- 2.1.9 CASA has a standardised process for assessing exemption applications. It involves an initial review by the Exemption Review Panel before assigning an exemption for assessment, if appropriate, to an exemption assessor. The exemption assessor will engage with the applicant as necessary.
- 2.1.10 Exemptions are a cost-recoverable activity and applicants are required to pay an initial fee estimate before CASA begins any assessment of the exemption. An assessment of an exemption may require more time than initially estimated, with the applicant to pay an additional fee, or it might consume less time than initially estimated and result in a refund.

¹ See section 11 of this AC for a brief outline of exceptional circumstances exemptions under Division 11.F.2 of CASR.

- 2.1.11 Payment of the fee for an exemption does not guarantee it will be granted and fees are not refunded if an exemption is declined to be granted, unless an element of the fee relates to work that CASA would have undertaken if a different decision was reached.
- 2.1.12 If the initial assessment of the exemption identifies that CASA would not grant the exemption based on current information, then the reasons for CASA's initial assessment will be provided to the applicant along with an opportunity for them to respond and provide more information before any final decision is reached.

3 Application for a standard exemption

3.1 Relevant legislation

3.1.1 The regulations that specifically outlines standards exemptions are contained in Division 11.F.1 of CASR, which includes regulations 11.155 to 11.175 of CASR.

3.2 Who may apply for an exemption?

3.2.1 Any person may apply for a standard exemption.

3.3 When to apply for an exemption

3.3.1 Unless otherwise agreed by CASA, an application must be received at least 3 months prior to when the exemption is required. CASA considers that an exemption against the regulations is a last resort and the intent of introducing a 3-month timeframe is to:

- ensure that the exemption application is given proper consideration
- encourage industry to adopt proper planning and management fall back strategies
- ensure that an exemption is absolutely necessary rather than a convenient method of complying with the legislation.

3.3.2 However, CASA is aware there may be unforeseen circumstances when an exemption will be required within a very short time frame. In these circumstances CASA will consider a late application provided the applicant submits suitable justification as to why the application was not submitted 3 months prior to when the exemption is required.

3.3.3 CASA will not accept poor planning or commercial impact on business as suitable justification. CASA will also need to establish if the reduced timeframe available will be adequate for proper assessment of the safety impact.

3.4 Where to apply for an exemption

3.4.1 An application for an exemption must use the [approved form](#). Exemption applications are to be submitted by e-mail to regservices@casa.gov.au.

3.5 How to apply for an exemption

3.5.1 An application for a standard exemption, as outlined in the relevant application form, must include:

- the applicant's name and address
 - o Where an exemption is being sought by an organisation, the application should also include the name and contact details of the primary point of contact for CASA in that organisation in relation to the application. As CASA will in most cases issue a standard exemption to a legal entity, if the applicant's trading name and entity name are different, the application should include the name of the legal entity to which CASA will issue the exemption.
 - o The entity should also quote its ABN and ARN.

- o If the exemption is in relation to a facility, the application should identify the location of the facility.
 - details of any authorisation held by the applicant which is relevant to the exemption
 - o At minimum, this should include the authorisation which makes the applicant subject to the provision from which they wish to be exempt (e.g. their flight crew licence if the provision applies to a pilot in command, or their AOC if the provision applies to an operator).
 - the relevant provisions of CASR from which the exemption is sought
 - o If an exemption is being sought from a provision of instrument, e.g. a MOS, with which compliance is mandatory under CASR, the applicant should also identify the relevant provision of the instrument.
 - details of the aircraft or aeronautical product, if applicable
 - o this may include type, model, serial number or registration
 - if the exemption will affect a particular kind of operation, the kind of operation
 - the reasons why the applicant needs the exemption
 - o The reasons provided should be detailed and fulsome.
 - o Not providing adequate information will result in delays to the processing of the application while CASA seeks the information necessary for it to consider the application.
 - details of how an acceptable level of safety will be provided
 - o Again, the application should be detailed and fulsome in this regard.
 - the date on which the exemption is required to commence
 - the required duration of the exemption
 - o which cannot be more than 3 years after it commences, see CASR 11.230 (1).
- 3.5.2 To the extent that an application does not provide either information required by CASRs 11.165 or 11.175 or information which is necessary for proper consideration of the application, CASA may request further information (see section 7 below).

3.6 Renewing an existing exemption

- 3.6.1 Under subregulation 11.175(1) of CASR, a person applying for the renewal of an existing exemption must apply as if the application is for a new exemption, with the additional requirement that they must include a statement of the additional reasons why the exemption is still necessary, or the reasons why a continuation of the exemption is necessary.
- 3.6.2 An applicant for the renewal of an exemption should be aware that a renewal application does not automatically entitle the person to the granting of a further exemption in the same or similar terms. Each application will be assessed on its merits at the time of the application.
- 3.6.3 CASA will not automatically renew existing exemptions held by an individual person or a corporation. Persons holding an exemption are responsible for applying for its renewal. Persons intending to request the renewal of an existing exemption are reminded that forgetting to apply for a renewal will not automatically result in CASA prioritising a late application.

4 CASA consideration of application for standard exemption

- 4.1.1 The regulations that are most relevant to CASA's consideration of an application for a standard exemption are regulations 11.035 to 11.050, and regulation 11.170 of CASR.
- 4.1.2 In considering an application for a standard exemption, CASA regards the preservation of a level of aviation safety that is at least acceptable as paramount².
- 4.1.3 Applicants are advised that under most circumstances, the level of acceptable aviation safety for a particular activity would be equivalent to the level of aviation safety for that activity established by the 'normal' legislation (i.e., Act, CAR, CASR, CAO, MOS). It would be reasonable for applicants to anticipate that the grant of an exemption permitting a lower level of aviation safety for a particular activity would normally only be granted where the legislation demonstrably did not anticipate the activity being performed in a particular manner or did not anticipate the performance of a particular activity at all.
- 4.1.4 Subregulation 11.170(1) of CASR states that regulations 11.035 to 11.050 inclusive apply to exemption applications. Under these regulations, CASA may ask the applicant to:
- provide further information
 - provide a copy of specific documents
 - undertake a test or tests of competence
 - come to a CASA office to be interviewed
 - carry out a demonstration.
- 4.1.5 Considerable research and investigation is often required before CASA can make a decision to grant or refuse to grant an exemption. Therefore, the application should be made at least three months before the requested start date. Only in exceptional circumstances will CASA consider an application with a requested start date less than 3 months after the date of application (see section 3.2).
- 4.1.6 In processing each application, CASA will consider all the information provided as well as anything in its records concerning the applicant. If there is anything adverse to the applicant in its records which CASA intends to take into account, CASA will inform the applicant in writing that it intends to take this information into account and will invite the applicant to make a written submission about the matter within a reasonable period. If the applicant responds with a written submission within that time then CASA will take the response into consideration.
- 4.1.7 If the applicant previously held an exemption that was revoked, CASA will take the reasons for the revocation into account as well as the evidence that the applicant submits about their capacity to carry out the functions necessary to gain the exemption.

² See subregulation 11.170(3) of CASR.

5 Notification of decision to the applicant

- 5.1.1 If the initial exemption assessment identifies that, based on current information, CASA would not grant the exemption, then the reasons for CASA's initial assessment will be provided to the applicant along with an opportunity to respond and provide more information before any final decision is made.
- 5.1.2 CASA will notify the applicant in writing of its final decision in accordance with the requirements of regulation 11.220 of CASR.
- 5.1.3 If CASA refuses to grant an exemption, or imposes conditions not sought by the applicant, then CASA will give reasons for its decision.
- 5.1.4 CASA will maintain a register of all conditions and the details of each exemption will be published on the [CASA website](#). See the lists of [legislative instruments](#) and [non-legislative instruments](#).

6 Conditions on a standard exemption

- 6.1.1 The regulations most relevant to conditions placed on standard exemptions are regulations 11.205 and 11.210 of CASR.
- 6.1.2 CASA may impose conditions on an exemption which are necessary in the interests of the safety of air navigation. All conditions imposed by CASA will be in writing and set out in the notice to the applicant. CASA will provide reasons for imposing conditions which were not sought by the applicant.
- 6.1.3 Conditions might relate to the:
- circumstances in which the exemption is operative
 - procedures to be used by the holder of the exemption
 - record-keeping by the holder of the exemption
 - specify alternative means of compliance to a prescriptive rule.
- 6.1.4 CASA will typically impose a condition on an exemption that a copy of it be included in a relevant document in the possession of the exemption holder, for example, its exposition / operations manual, procedures manual, aircraft logbook, personal logbook, etc.
- 6.1.5 A breach of a condition is an offence under regulation 11.210 of CASR. Further, a person who is not complying with an exemption does not gain the benefit of the exemption, and hence may also be in breach of the provision of CASR from which the exemption has been granted.

7 Commencement, duration and publication of exemptions

- 7.1.1 The regulations that are most relevant to the commencement, duration and publication of exemptions are regulations 11.225 and 11.230 of CASR.
- 7.1.2 Exemptions are legislative instruments for the purposes of the Legislative Instruments Act 2003. They must be registered on the [Federal Register of Legislation](#) and must be tabled in both Houses of Parliament. CASA will undertake the necessary Government and legal procedures necessary to give effect to an exemption. However, the fact that exemptions are legislative instruments has consequences for their commencement and duration, and their publication.
- 7.1.3 An exemption will normally start on the time stated in the exemption. However, except in unusual circumstances, CASA will not put a commencement date on an exemption which is before the day after the date of registration of the exemption on the Federal Register of Legislation. There is a risk that an exemption which commences prior to that date will be invalid. In the normal course of events, an exemption will be registered on the Federal Register of Legislation within 5 working days of it being signed by the relevant delegate in CASA.
- 7.1.4 An exemption will also contain an expiry date or circumstances in which the exemption will expire. This may be after a number of hours of operation or a calendar date or after some specific event, such as an air display.
- 7.1.5 If an expiry date is specified, the exemption ceases at the end of the specified day. The maximum duration of an exemption is 3 calendar years.
- Example:** An exemption granted for the maximum duration on 12 June 2013 will expire at midnight on 11 June 2016.
- 7.1.6 If the exemption is granted to the owner of a particular aircraft and the owner sells the aircraft, the exemption will cease upon sale of the aircraft. If an exemption is granted in relation to an aerodrome and the person who was granted the exemption no longer operates the aerodrome, the exemption will also cease.
- 7.1.7 Because an exemption is a legislative instrument, it may also be disallowed by a House of Parliament within a certain period of it being tabled in Parliament. An exemption which has been disallowed by a House of Parliament cannot be re-made within 6 months of the disallowance.

8 Exemptions are not transferable

- 8.1.1 Regulation 11.235 of CASR specifies that an exemption is not transferable. They are not property and cannot be handed from person to person.
- 8.1.2 As standard exemptions are generally issued to specified legal entities, should another entity wish to take advantage of the exemption it must apply for the same exemption in its own right. This includes exemptions which may be issued in relation to aircraft or facilities which, as property, can be transferred.

9 Revocation of an exemption

9.1.1 CASA may revoke an exemption:

- on request by its holder³
- at any time revoke an exemption in the interests of safety.

9.1.2 This may occur due to the applicant not complying with the conditions of the exemption, or special circumstances arising and CASA becoming aware that continuation of the exemption may result in a lower than acceptable level of aviation safety.

9.1.3 If CASA decides to revoke an exemption other than on request, it will normally give the holder of the exemption reasonable notice of its intention to do so and provide them with the opportunity to respond. CASA will take the exemption holder's response into account in deciding whether or not to revoke the exemption.

9.1.4 CASA may not provide prior notice of its intention to revoke an exemption in circumstances of serious and imminent risk to air navigation, or where the applicant has been found guilty of breaching a condition of the exemption or a related provision of the legislation.

9.1.5 Where CASA revokes an exemption, it will do so in writing and will state the reasons for the revocation.

³ See regulation 11.130 of CASR.

10 Exemptions in exceptional circumstances

- 10.1.1 The relevant regulations relating to exemptions granted in exceptional circumstances are contained in Division 11.F.2 of CASR, which includes regulations 11.180 to 11.195 of CASR.
- 10.1.2 During exceptional circumstances such as a major natural disaster, a large-scale emergency or an emergency to which a national emergency declaration relates, that requires the use of air transport or some other aviation activity in a way that is not reasonably possible in compliance with the legislation, CASA can grant an exemption on its own initiative or on an application from Government or industry.
- Example:** The destruction of Darwin by Cyclone Tracy would have been an exceptional circumstance. In that case, airliners were allowed to operate with excess loads to enable evacuation of the city as rapidly as possible.
- 10.1.3 Under these types of circumstances, an application can be made in any way that is reasonable. This may be by phone, radio or any other communication method that is available at the time.
- 10.1.4 As time is critical in such circumstances, CASA may notify applicants or affected parties verbally of the granting of the exemption and will follow up with a written notice.
- 10.1.5 CASA will publish the details of the exemption in the same locations as for Standard Exemptions (i.e. on the [CASA website](#) and the [Federal Register of Legislation](#)).
- 10.1.6 Exemptions issued in exceptional circumstances have a maximum duration of 12 months⁴.

⁴ See subregulation 11.230(2) of CASR.