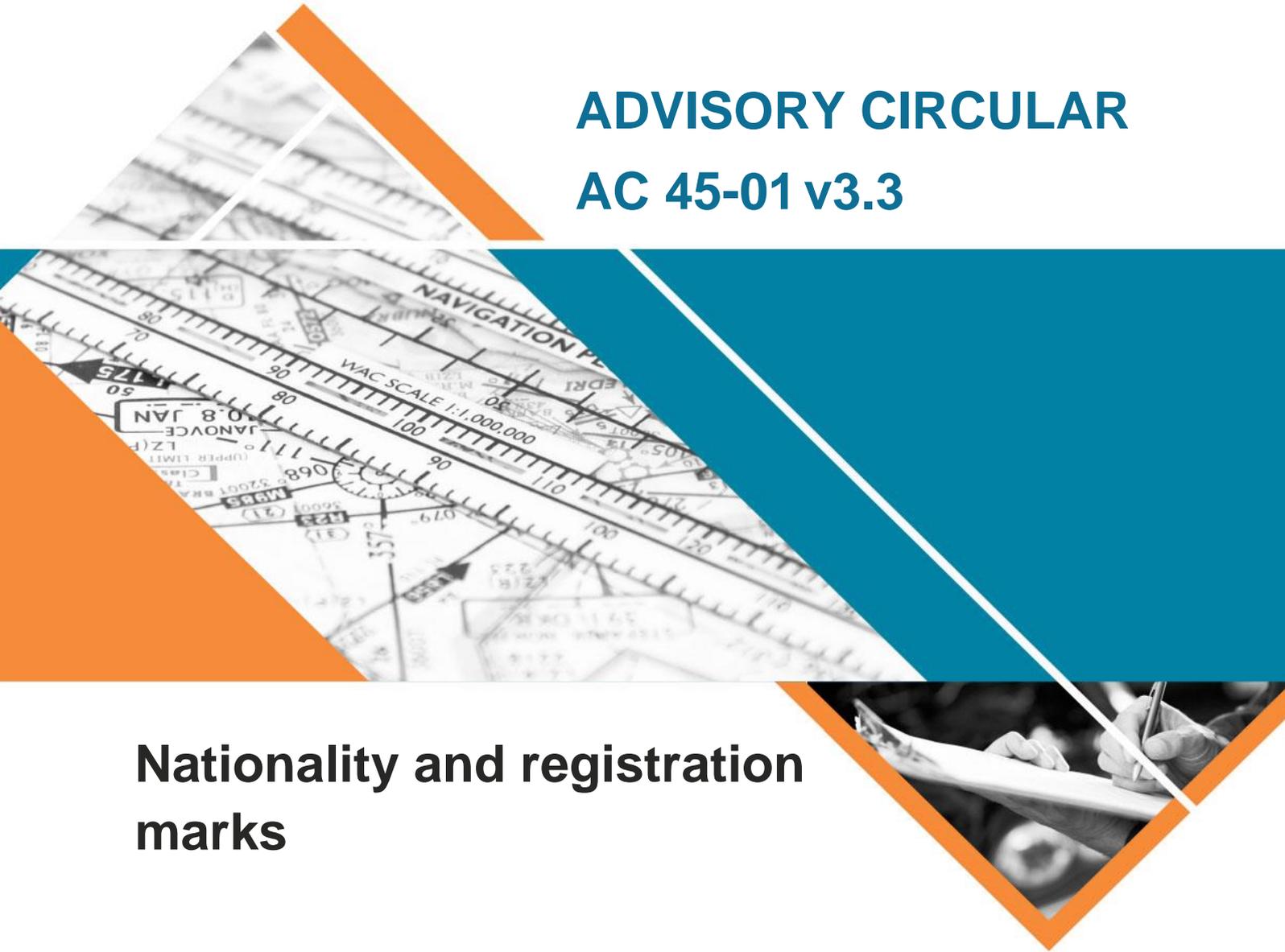




ADVISORY CIRCULAR

AC 45-01 v3.3



Nationality and registration marks

Date April 2024
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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:

- aircraft registration holders
- owners/operators of aircraft
- maintainers of aircraft.

Purpose

This AC provides guidance and information concerning the registration marking of aircraft and the fireproof aircraft registration data plates.

For further information

For further information, contact CASA's Specialist Services (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, Client Services Centre.

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

Version	Date	Details
v3.3	April 2024	This amendment removes redundant references to exemptions that have been incorporated into Part 45 of CASR. It also includes updates to regulatory references and minor improvements.
v3.2	November 2022	Administrative review only.
(2.1)	March 2015	This second amendment of AC 45-01 (2.1) includes details of an exemption to some of the requirements of Part 45 of CASR 1998 - Display of nationality and registration marks and aircraft registration identification plates.
(2)	March 2010	This is the second amendment of this AC which includes details of an exemption to some of the requirements of CASR Part 45 Display of nationality and registration marks and aircraft registration identification plates.
(1)	March 2008	This is the first amendment of this AC which includes details of an exemption to some of the requirements of CASR Part 45 — Nationality and Registration Marks.
(0)	August 2000	Initial 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.

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

2 Background

Under the provisions of the *Civil Aviation Act 1988* (the Act) and implementing CASR, except as provided in regulation 47.175 of CASR, a civil aircraft must be registered and identified before it may be operated as an Australian aircraft.

Part 45 of CASR contains provisions governing the display and description of nationality and registration marks on Australian aircraft and requirements for:

- nationality and registration marks of Australian aircraft
- special marking rules for exhibition, antique and other aircraft
- display, location and size of marks on aircraft
- aircraft (nationality and registration) registration identification plate
- marking of export aircraft
- removal of marks following sale of the aircraft.

Note: Aircraft marked in accordance with the *Civil Aviation Regulations 1988* (CAR) (prior to the commencement of Part 45 of CASR) do not need to make any change to the markings to comply with Part 45 of CASR until the aircraft is repainted.

3 Nationality and registration marks

The nationality mark for an Australian aircraft is 'VH'. The nationality mark is followed by a hyphen and registration mark of three characters. No emblem, symbol, or decoration may be placed between the 'VH' and the registration mark, or between any of the characters in the registration mark. The registration mark shall have been allocated for use by CASA or an agent of CASA.

Notes:

1. The Gliding Federation of Australia allocates registration marks for gliders and motor gliders under a Part 47 of CASR delegation.
2. Recreational Aviation Australia Inc, the Hang Gliding Federation of Australia Inc and the Australian Sport Rotorcraft Association Inc allocate registration marks for other sport aviation aircraft under Civil Aviation Order (CAO) 95.10, 95.32, 95.55 — Exemptions from Provisions of the Civil Aviation Regulations.

If the registration holder's aircraft is in the 'restricted', 'limited', 'experimental' or 'Provisional' category or class, they will need to ensure that the words, as the case may be, are displayed on their aircraft, in accordance with chapter 3 of the Part 45 Manual of Standards (MOS).

An acceptable means of securing the degree of permanence required for aircraft marking is to use paint of a kind that would require thinners or strippers to remove, or to affix the nationality and registration marks in the form of placards. The use of tape which can be peeled off or water-soluble paint, such as poster paint, does not provide an acceptable level of permanence.

Ornamentation and colour contrast may affect the legibility of the nationality and registration marks. For example, nationality and registration marks may contrast in colour with the background but still may not be legible if the background is highly decorated in some manner, such as checkering. To be legible, 500 mm marks should be clearly distinguishable without optical aid (e.g. binoculars) from a distance of 150 m, in a horizontal line, perpendicular to the side of the aircraft during daylight hours.

Marks may be computer generated and, as such, are designed to be optically true and at the same time aesthetically pleasing to the eye. CASA accepts the use of computer graphics for the generation of registration marks, and the use of laser cut adhesive backed tape. The only concern is that the final product must satisfy the criteria for permanency.

Further, subject to the application of professional sign-writing practice and the geometry of the aircraft, the nationality and registration marks may be skewed to an acceptable degree. It is not the intention to specify what constitutes 'an acceptable degree' but should not be more than 35 degrees from the perpendicular in order that the marks are still legible.

4 Display of marks

The standards for nationality and registration marks with respect to colour, legibility, permanence, location, and size are specified in Part 45 of CASR.

Unless authorised by CASA, a person must not place a design, mark, or symbol on the aircraft that modifies or confuses the nationality, registration mark or any of the marks depicting the 'restricted', 'limited', 'experimental', 'amateur-built' or 'provisional' markings.

Aircraft that are exempt from registration under Part 47 of CASR but are required to be registered under CAO 95 must display the registration mark assigned by the appropriate recreational aviation administration organisation.

Any such Australian aircraft, including gliders registered under Part 47 of CASR, operating outside Australian Territory must also display the Australian nationality letters 'VH-' as a prefix to their registration mark.

Note: Australian Territory means:

- a) the territory of Australia and of every external Territory
- b) the territorial sea of Australia and of every external Territory
- c) the air space over any such territory or sea.

(Part 1 Section 3 of the Act)

5 Special marking rules

With respect to antique, restored or replica aircraft or when the aircraft is being operated for the purpose of exhibition (including motion pictures, television or air shows), the display of aircraft nationality and registration markings may be relaxed at the discretion of CASA.

The relaxation is only permitted if:

- the aircraft is operated at the location of the exhibition
- the aircraft is flying to and from the exhibition
- CASA has been provided with a photograph (or drawing) of the aircraft
- the aircraft is operated within Australian territory.

Similar relaxation provisions with respect to the size and location of nationality and registration markings exist for Part 23 of CASR (or similar), certificated aircraft built at least 45 years ago, or Australian registered aircraft for which an experimental certificate has been issued, provided that the aircraft is not operated in a foreign country or operated for commercial purposes under Part 206 of CAR.

Any special marking rules in place regarding amateur-built aircraft, previously specified in CAO 101.28 shall, at the time of introduction of the new legislation, continue. These aircraft are classified as aircraft under special configuration rules specified in regulation 45.140 of CASR.

6 Aircraft registration identification plate

All registered aircraft in Australia are required to have two identification plates affixed to the aircraft as described in regulation 45.120 of CASR and regulation 21.820 of CASR. The manufacturer's data plate identifies make, model and serial number of the aircraft. The registration identification plate is only required to display the nationality and registration mark.

Note: regulation 45.120 of CASR allows aircraft with an MTOW of less than 5,700 kg operating in Australia to fly without the identification plate.

The aircraft registration holder is required to have a 'fire-proof' aircraft registration identification plate specifying the nationality and registration mark of the aircraft (suitably marked by etching, stamping, engraving or other approved method), and attached to an 'accessible location near an entrance' of the aircraft as prescribed in Subpart 45.D of CASR. This is in addition to the manufacturer's aircraft identification data plate.

An 'accessible location near an entrance' for an aircraft registration identification plate may be either external or internal and would be considered acceptable when it is visible to a person at, or within, the entrance to the aircraft. 'Accessible' does not mean that the aircraft registration identification plate must be visible from the outside or without opening the door, or that it must be visible without removing things such as baggage or carry-on items from the aircraft. For an aircraft with more than one door, the entrance most used by the flight crew would be considered the most appropriate location for the identification plate. If, under certain conditions, the plate is covered or enclosed in any manner, its accessibility would be considered acceptable if it can be revealed without the use of tools or removing aircraft components.

The term 'fireproof', as it relates to the nationality and registration identification plate to be affixed to the aircraft, is defined by regulation 21.810 of CASR to mean the capacity to withstand the heat associated with fire at least as well as steel in dimensions appropriate for the purpose for which they are used.

Subregulations 45.130 (1) and (2) of CASR prohibits any person from removing, installing, or altering information on an aircraft registration identification plate without CASA approval. This requirement seeks to control the practice of building an aircraft from spare parts and installing an aircraft registration identification plate, or manufacturer's aircraft identification data plate from a scrapped or destroyed aircraft. Without prior approval from CASA, the purchase and fitment of a second-hand plate would be in violation of Part 45 of CASR.

Note: An offence against subregulations 45.130 (1) and (2) and regulation 21.855 of CASR is an offence of strict liability (For strict liability, see section 6.1 of the Criminal Code).

With the written approval of CASA, subregulation 45.130 (1) of CASR allows for the plate to be removed in order to carry out maintenance and re-installing of the data plate.

Note: For further information, see regulation 21.855 of CASR— Removal of aircraft registration identification on critical parts

An aircraft manufacturer preparing an aircraft for sale overseas and subsequent registration in another country may display marks required by the country of registry. The manufacturer is not permitted to operate the aircraft in this country for purposes other than test or demonstration flights as part of the sales promotion.

This section applies when an aircraft intended for export has had its Australian registration cancelled and has had nationality and registration marks assigned to it from another country; that is, the ICAO 'State of Registry'. Accordingly, such aircraft may display the nationality and registration marks of the other country rather than the Australian marks, as described below:

An aircraft prepared by a manufacturer for export from Australia, which is already registered in its importing country, but that has not been issued with a Certificate of Airworthiness from the importing country.. It is necessary to display the nationality and registration marks of the importing country and obtain a special flight authorisation under regulation 21.197 of CASR to operate these aircraft in Australia.