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Civil Aviation Safety Authority

ADVISORY CIRCULAR
AC 139.B-01 v1.2

Applying for aerodrome certification

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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:

- aerodrome owners/operators seeking to certify their aerodrome
- consultants engaged to act on behalf of the aerodrome owner/operator
- the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).

Purpose

This AC provides supplementary guidance to applicants on the process to be followed when seeking to certify an aerodrome.

Adherence to the processes outlined in this AC will ensure that applications for an aerodrome certificate are completed in an effective, efficient, and consistent manner, nationally.

For further information

For further information or to provide feedback on this AC, visit CASA's [contact us](#) page.

Status

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

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

Table 1: Status

Version	Date	Details
v1.2	April 2025	Variation to the information that is required and may be included on the Aerodrome Certificate. New CASA style template applied.
v1.1	August 2023	Updated submission email at sec 4.2.6
v1.0	June 2020	Initial release of this AC.

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

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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.

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
AIP	aeronautical information publication
AIS	aeronautical information service
ARC	aerodrome reference code
ARN	Aviation Reference Number
ARO	aerodrome reporting officer
CAR	<i>Civil Aviation Regulations 1988</i>
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CASR	<i>Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998</i>
CNS	communications, navigation, surveillance equipment
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
MET	meteorological facilities
MOS	<i>Manual of Standards</i>
NOTAM	notice to airmen
OLS	obstacle limitation surface
SMS	safety management system

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
accountable manager	A position that is appointed to ensure that inspection, reporting, operational and maintenance activities at the aerodrome meet the regulatory requirements.

Term	Definition
	The accountable manager must have a general knowledge of the relevant civil aviation safety standards that are applicable to the inspection, reporting, safe operation and maintenance of the aerodrome.
Aerodrome	A defined area on land or water (including any buildings, installations and equipment) intended for use wholly or partly for the arrival, departure and surface movement of aircraft.
aerodrome certificate	A document issued to an authorisation holder by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority under the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 which authorises operation of a regulated aerodrome.
aerodrome facility	Means any of the following physical things at an aerodrome: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the physical characteristics of any movement area, including runways, taxiways, taxilanes, shoulders, aprons, primary and secondary parking positions, runway strips and taxiway strips b. infrastructure c. structures d. equipment e. earthing points f. cables g. lighting h. signage i. markings j. visual approach slope indicators k. any other similar thing that is physical matter and is used for the operation of aircraft at the aerodrome.
aerodrome technical inspection	An inspection of the facilities and equipment of a certified aerodrome, conducted by, or on behalf of, the aerodrome operator to ensure detection of any deterioration that could make any of the facilities or equipment unsafe for aircraft operations.
Applicant	A person or an organisation who makes formal application to certify an aerodrome.
authorisation holder	A holder of a civil aviation authorisation as that term is defined in section 3 of the Civil Aviation Act 1988 i.e. "an authorisation under this Act or the regulations to undertake a particular activity (whether the authorisation is called an AOC, permission, authority, licence, certification, rating or endorsement or is known by some other name)".
aviation reference number	A customer number unique to you and should be quoted whenever you communicate with CASA.
Manual of Standards	A document containing the aerodrome standards, published by CASA (under the CASRs), as in force from time to time.
notice to airmen	A notice to airmen (NOTAM) is a notice containing information concerning the establishment, condition or change in any aeronautical facility, service, procedure or hazard, the timely knowledge of which is essential to personnel concerned with flight operations.

Term	Definition
post-authorisation review	A review conducted to ensure entry control standards are being maintained and conducted within six to 15 months following the initial issue, depending on the type of authorisation issued.
regulated aerodromes	A certified aerodrome to which Part 139 of CASR applies.
Surveillance	Oversight of authorisation holders performed by CASA pursuant to section 9(1)(f) of the Civil Aviation Act 1988 (the Act).
surveillance event	Activity by which CASA assesses the safety performance of regulated aviation activities.
visual aids	Visual aids to navigation in the form of markers, markings, lights, signs, signals, displays or wind direction indicators, or a combination of these, which provide information to aircraft and vehicles on, or using the movement area of the aerodrome.

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 11 of CASR 1998	Regulatory administrative procedures
Part 139 of CASR 1998	Aerodrome regulation
Part 175 of CASR 1998	Aeronautical information management
Part 139 MOS	Aerodrome standards

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.C-01	Aerodrome manual
AC 139.C-02	Aerodrome personnel

1.4 Forms

CASA's forms are available at <http://www.casa.gov.au/forms>

Table 6: Forms

Form number	Title
1162	Aviation Reference Number (ARN) Application - Individual
1170	Aviation Reference Number (ARN) Application - Organisation
1186	Application for an aerodrome certificate

2 Fundamentals of aerodrome certification

2.1 The applicant

2.1.1 The applicant for an aerodrome certificate should be the operator of the aerodrome. An aerodrome operator can be:

- the owner of the aerodrome
- the actual person, or organisation, operating the aerodrome, and holding a lease or other management arrangement with the owner of the land on which the aerodrome is located.

2.2 Applicant obligations

2.2.1 To be granted an aerodrome certificate, the applicant is required to demonstrate to CASA that:

- they have the authority to use the land on which the facilities are located
- the aerodrome facilities, equipment, aerodrome manual, and required management systems fully comply with the requirements of the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR)* and the Part 139 (Aerodromes) Manual of Standards (MOS).

2.3 Granting an aerodrome certificate

2.3.1 In accordance with Part 11.055 of the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR)*, CASA may grant the authorisation only if the aerodrome facilities, equipment, aerodrome manual, and required management systems, comply with the CASR and the Part 139 MOS, and the aerodrome operator has demonstrated that they can safely operate and maintain the aerodrome.

2.3.2 CASA may impose conditions for an authorisation in the interests in preserving an acceptable level of aviation safety.

2.3.3 If conditions are imposed, the condition, or conditions, will be included on, or attached to the aerodrome certificate.

2.4 How long does an aerodrome certificate remain valid?

2.4.1 An aerodrome certificate is perpetual and will remain in place until it is no longer required (surrendered) by the aerodrome operator, or until it is suspended or cancelled by CASA.

2.5 Is an aerodrome certificate transferable?

2.5.1 Under Part 11 of CASR an aerodrome certificate cannot be transferred.

2.5.2 In the event the aerodrome is subject to a change in ownership or lease arrangement, the new applicant may need to make a formal application in accordance with the application process outlined in chapter 4 of this AC.

2.5.3 To avoid any potential impact to aircraft operations, it is essential that the new applicant discusses their situation with CASA well in advance to ensure all relevant matters can be considered.

2.6 Suspension or cancellation of an aerodrome certificate

- 2.6.1 CASA may commence coordinated enforcement action that may result in the suspension or cancellation of an aerodrome certificate if CASA believes that:
- the aerodrome facilities, equipment, aerodrome manual or management systems do not comply with the regulatory requirements
 - the aerodrome operator is failing to operate or maintain the aerodrome with a reasonable degree of care and due diligence
 - a condition to which the certificate is subject has been breached
 - the aerodrome facilities and equipment, or the operation or maintenance of the aerodrome, are not of the standards necessary in the interests of aviation safety
 - access to the aerodrome is not being provided by the aerodrome operator to allow CASA to conduct tests of the aerodrome facilities and equipment or operating procedures, for the purposes of ensuring the safety of aircraft.
- 2.6.2 Before suspending or cancelling an aerodrome certificate CASA will give notice in writing to the aerodrome operator, setting out the facts and circumstances that would justify the proposed coordinated enforcement action.
- 2.6.3 The aerodrome operator will be invited to respond as to why the certificate should not be suspended or cancelled.
- 2.6.4 CASA will consider the aerodrome operators response in determining if it is necessary to proceed with imposing the suspension or cancellation.

2.7 Refusal to issue a certificate

- 2.7.1 CASA may refuse to grant the issue of an aerodrome certificate due to the following:
- the aerodrome manual does not comply with the requirements prescribed by the CASRs and the Part 139 MOS
 - the aerodrome facilities and equipment do not comply with the CASRs and the Part 139 MOS requirements
 - the applicant could not demonstrate that key personnel had been trained and were competent to carry out their roles and responsibilities
 - the applicant would not be able to operate and maintain the aerodrome safely and in accordance with the aerodrome manual for the aerodrome, and the civil aviation legislation.
- 2.7.2 Should CASA refuse to grant the issue of a certificate, CASA will provide the applicant written notice of the decision including the reasons for the decision.

3 Preparing to apply for an aerodrome certificate

3.1 Safeguarding your aerodrome

3.1.1 Aerodromes need to be properly planned and protected to ensure their safe and efficient operation.

3.1.2 To avoid the potential for operations being constrained, the applicant should engage with federal, state, and/or local planning authorities to consider:

- infringements into the prescribed airspace around an aerodrome
- emissions, lighting, or glare in the vicinity of the aerodrome which may be hazardous to pilots
- sites in proximity of the aerodrome that may attract wildlife and lead to the risk of wildlife strike
- windshear from nearby developments or terrain
- any potential impacts to communication, navigation and surveillance (CNS) equipment
- public safety.

3.2 Key considerations - intended operations

1.4.1 Prior to making an application for an aerodrome certificate, it is recommended the aerodrome operator discuss the intended aircraft operating requirements with each operator that is likely to use the aerodrome. These could include:

- airlines intending to provide air transport services
- emergency service organisations
- flying training organisations
- any other organisation that may base their operation at the aerodrome (i.e. aircraft maintenance providers etc.).

3.2.1 Where a terminal instrument flight procedure is being considered, it is recommended that the aerodrome operator consult with a certified instrument flight procedure designer to identify, and to understand, any potential facility requirements or operational implications that may result.

3.2.2 The availability of CNS and meteorological (MET) facilities, and the proximity of the aerodrome to other aerodromes, obstacles and terrain, may require further consultation with external stakeholders. These may include, but not be limited to:

- Airservices Australia
- Bureau of Meteorology
- land-use planning authorities responsible for the aerodrome site and those in the aerodrome vicinity (i.e. within 15 km of the aerodrome)
- neighbouring aerodrome operators.

3.2.3 Emergency response plans administered by local authorities will be critical in the event of an aviation incident, accident or emergency, therefore the applicant should engage off-site emergency response agencies early in the planning phase.

3.2.4 CASA may conduct a risk assessment when an aerodrome reaches certain passenger and aircraft movement numbers to determine if an air traffic control service and/or an aerodrome

rescue and fire-fighting service needs to be established. If the aerodrome could potentially become a controlled aerodrome, early engagement with Airservices Australia is essential.

3.3 Preliminary meeting with CASA

3.3.1 As the CASRs and the Part 139 MOS can be considered complex, where practical the applicant is encouraged to meet with CASA to ensure that they have a good understanding of their legislative obligations and the certification process itself.

3.3.2 At this meeting, the applicant should be prepared with the following:

- intended aerodrome reference codes (ARC) applicable to the aerodrome facilities
- type of aircraft operations that may use the aerodrome
- anticipated number of air transport passenger movements (annually)
- anticipated number of aircraft movements (annually)
- intended introduction of terminal instrument flight procedures (if applicable)
- potential provision of CNS facilities on the aerodrome
- potential provision of MET facilities on the aerodrome
- particulars of the actual or intended aerodrome site and associated facilities
- proposed obstacle limitation surface, including the identification of any potential or existing obstacles
- an awareness of intended management systems to support their operation.

3.3.3 Additional meeting(s) may be required throughout the certification process, particularly where matters of clarification may be necessary.

3.4 Aviation reference number

3.4.1 Any individual or organisation that holds, or intends to hold an authorisation issued by CASA, will require an aviation reference number (ARN) at the time of application.

3.4.2 An ARN is a unique identifier that belongs to the entity that holds the licence, permission or authorisation

3.4.3 Application for an ARN is made online via the CASA website. <<https://www.casa.gov.au>>

3.5 ICAO code

3.5.1 An ICAO location code, commonly referred to in Australia as a Y code, is a location indicator which is used by air traffic control and airline operators for matters such as flight planning.

3.5.2 In the event the aerodrome has yet to be assigned a Y code, a code will be allocated and issued by Airservices Australia.

3.6 Aeronautical information

3.6.1 In accordance with Part 175 of CASR, an aerodrome operator is considered an aeronautical data originator for their aerodrome.

3.6.2 To meet their obligations, an operator seeking to certify their aerodrome is required to:

- appoint a single senior manager as the Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) Responsible Person for their aerodrome

- appoint a NOTAM authorised person(s) who is responsible for requesting the issue, review and cancellation of NOTAMs
- provide specific information that satisfies Part 139 and Part 175 of CASR, to the Aeronautical Information Service (AIS) provider (Airservices Australia) for publication in the AIP.

3.6.3 It is advisable the aerodrome operator contacts Airservices prior to applying for certification to inform them of their intent to certify their aerodrome. The aerodrome operator should request from Airservices a data product specification (DPS) that will outline all information required to be submitted, including the data quality requirements for submission of that information.

3.6.4 This will also allow adequate time for processing and the publication of information in accordance with the AIRAC publication cycle.

4 The application process

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 Applications should be submitted in sufficient time to allow for detailed consideration of the documentation and a site inspection of the aerodrome facility. For a standard aerodrome application, this process may take approximately three (3) months provided that the documentation, as well as the aerodrome infrastructure and associated facilities, meet the compliance requirements, and that no safety concerns are identified. This period may be extended for international or more complex aerodrome certificate applications.
- 4.1.2 Progression through each stage of the process is dependent on the applicant providing the required information and it being assessed by CASA as being satisfactory against the regulatory requirements.
- 4.1.3 CASA may carry out testing on any aspect of the aerodrome or seek additional information to substantiate compliance requirements.
- 4.1.4 As CASA cannot always provide a definitive timeframe for certification, applicants are cautioned against entering into inflexible operational or scheduling commitments with aircraft operators.

4.2 Making an application

- 4.2.1 Operators of existing certified and existing registered aerodromes need not re-apply for an aerodrome certificate on commencement of the amended CASRs and revised Part 139 MOS; refer to AC 139.A-03 'Application of aerodrome standards'.
- 4.2.2 A new applicant seeking to obtain aerodrome certification is required to complete and submit to CASA an application form; refer to Form 1186 Application for an aerodrome certificate.
- 4.2.3 The application form is to be accompanied by a copy of the applicants proposed aerodrome manual for the aerodrome.
- 4.2.4 In addition to identifying all persons that have a responsibility for the safe operation of the aerodrome, the aerodrome manual describes the aerodromes facilities and the procedures on how the aerodrome will operate safely. AC 139.C-01 'Aerodrome Manual' provides guidance on developing an aerodrome manual. A sample aerodrome manual guide and template are also available.
- 4.2.5 It is the responsibility of the aerodrome operator to be satisfied with the appropriateness of each provision of their aerodrome manual.
- 4.2.6 The application form and the proposed aerodrome manual are to be sent to CASA via the e-mail address aerodromes@casa.gov.au
- 4.2.7 The application will not, under any circumstances, be accepted without the submission of the proposed aerodrome manual. An incomplete aerodrome manual will not be accepted.
- 4.2.8 Upon receipt of a complete application form and an aerodrome manual the application will be allocated for processing.

4.3 Engagement of a third-party contractor

- 4.3.1 The applicant may engage a consultant to assist them in preparing their application for aerodrome certification.
- 4.3.2 If using a third-party contractor who will be required to communicate with CASA on the applicant's behalf, CASA will require a signed letter of authority that authorises CASA to liaise directly with the nominated third-party contractor during the certification process.

4.4 Payment of processing fee and cost estimate

- 4.4.1 In accordance with the *Civil Aviation (Fees) Regulations 1995*, a cost estimate will be determined and issued to the applicant for payment.
- 4.4.2 The fee will cover the certification process, which includes a comprehensive review of required documentation (i.e. the aerodrome manual and other relevant management systems as applicable), and a facility site inspection.
- 4.4.3 The estimate is an approximation only and will be reconciled at the end of the certification process.
- 4.4.4 The certification process will not proceed further until the applicant has paid the cost estimate in full, or an approval is provided under the line of credit provisions.
- 4.4.5 On completion of the certification process, the account will be reconciled. If the final cost is greater than the amount paid, an invoice will be issued to recover the remaining balance due. If the final cost is less than the amount paid, a refund will be issued.
- 4.4.6 A tax invoice/receipt will be sent when the final payment/refund has been processed.
- 4.4.7 Existing certified and existing registered aerodromes transitioning to the new rules will not incur a processing fee.

4.5 Evaluation of the proposed aerodrome manual

- 4.5.1 The information presented in the aerodrome manual will be checked and evaluated by an aerodrome inspector to ensure that:
- the aerodrome manual contains all the required information
 - the documented processes and procedures demonstrate the applicant can effectively operate and maintain the aerodrome.

4.6 Proposed aerodrome manual provisionally accepted

- 4.6.1 If the aerodrome manual has been assessed as meeting the regulatory requirements, the aerodrome manual will be provisionally accepted pending further validation during the site inspection phase of the certification process.

4.7 Proposed aerodrome manual not provisionally accepted

- 4.7.1 In the event deficiencies in the aerodrome manual are identified, the applicant will be advised.
- 4.7.2 The applicant may be required to provide additional information that may necessitate an amendment to and resubmission of their aerodrome manual.
- 4.7.3 CASA may stop considering the application until all the required information is received.
- 4.7.4 The site inspection phase of the certification process will not occur until the aerodrome manual has been provisionally accepted.

4.8 Provision of a terminal instrument flight procedure

- 4.8.1 In the event the aerodrome is intending to have an instrument runway available immediately upon certification, the aerodrome operator is to, if applicable, provide written confirmation from the procedure designer on the critical obstacles that require monitoring. In the event there are no critical obstacles, a statement from the procedure designer should be provided as confirmation.

4.9 Site inspection

- 4.9.1 A site inspection of the aerodrome, its facilities, and associated visual aids will be conducted by CASA.
- 4.9.2 During the site inspection, CASA will meet with the nominated accountable manager, and at least one nominated ARO. Procedures will be verified where appropriate, and training records of key personnel may be inspected.
- 4.9.3 Where a Safety Management System (SMS) or a Risk Management Plan (RMP) is required, CASA may seek evidence to confirm that aviation risks have been identified and documented, and control measures have been considered.

4.10 Deficiencies identified during the site inspection

- 4.10.1 Any deficiencies identified during the site inspection phase of the certification process will be documented by the aerodrome inspector.
- 4.10.2 Written notification will be provided to the applicant detailing any deficiencies within three (3) weeks of concluding the site inspection.
- 4.10.3 Where deficiencies have been identified, the applicant will be required to address each one. Before CASA is in a position to continue with the application, a plan of corrective action(s) to achieve compliance may be required. A timeframe for the rectification of each deficiency should be clearly identified.
- 4.10.4 When considering whether the certification can proceed, the aerodrome inspector will consider:
- each deficiency in isolation
 - the severity of the deficiency
 - the proposed corrective action(s).
- 4.10.5 Where corrective action is required to be completed before a certificate can be issued, evidence of close-out is to be provided to CASA.

4.11 Issue of the certificate for authorisation

- 4.11.1 Provided all requirements have been met, the aerodrome certificate will be issued to the applicant by CASA.
- 4.11.2 The authorisation must set out:
- a. what the authorisation is
 - b. any conditions applicable to it
 - c. when it came into effect and, if it will cease, the date when it will cease

- d. any other information CASA determines as required. An appendix may be attached to the certificate describing the essential conditions prevailing at the aerodrome, which may include:
 - i. the aerodrome reference code
 - ii. critical aeroplane type
 - iii. the operational conditions for the accommodation of critical aeroplanes for which the facility is provided
 - iv. RFF category
 - v. the operational restrictions at the aerodrome
- e. any authorised deviations related to aerodrome compatibility, their inherent operational conditions/restrictions and validity.

4.12 Conditions on an aerodrome certificate

- 4.12.1 If conditions are imposed by CASA, they will be set out in, or attached to, the aerodrome certificate. The aerodrome operator is required to record these conditions in their aerodrome manual.

4.13 Promulgation of the status of certification

- 4.13.1 At the time of granting the aerodrome certificate, CASA will advise Airservices Australia that the aerodrome is certified. Airservices Australia will update the published information to reflect the aerodrome status as certified.
- 4.13.2 Post certification.

4.14 Obligations of the aerodrome operator post certification

- 4.14.1 The grant of an aerodrome certificate means the aerodrome operator is responsible for ensuring the operation of the aerodrome in accordance with the aerodrome manual.
- 4.14.2 The aerodrome operator is required to maintain the aerodrome in accordance with the procedures set out in the aerodrome manual.
- 4.14.3 The aerodrome operator should regularly monitor the passenger and aircraft movement numbers to ensure they remain compliant with their obligations.
- 4.14.4 Where there is a change to the aerodrome's facilities or the operating environment, the aerodrome manual is to be updated to maintain its accuracy. A copy of the revised aerodrome manual is to be provided to CASA within thirty (30) days.