



Australian Government
Civil Aviation Safety Authority

AERODROME REPORTING OFFICER GUIDE



WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR:

- anyone who is or intends to be an Aerodrome Reporting Officer (ARO)
- anyone who is part of the process of hiring an ARO
- aerodrome operators.

This guide contains broad information about the role of an ARO. It is not an exhaustive step-by-step description of the regulations and duties relating to the role.

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INTRODUCTION

Maintaining aerodrome facilities is crucial for ensuring they are safe and suitable for aviation operations.

AROs are the gatekeepers to thousands of runways at aerodromes across Australia. The ARO inspects critical areas of the airfield to ensure facilities such as the movement area (runways, taxiways, aprons), obstacle limitation surfaces, equipment and/or visual aids and other aerodrome infrastructure is safe for aircraft use. An ARO is required to monitor, maintain, and accurately report on the aerodrome for the safety of all users.

Depending on the size of the aerodrome, an ARO may be part of a team that conducts specific ARO duties, or at other aerodromes conduct additional duties such as a works safety officer (WSO). A WSO ensures works conducted within the movement area of an aerodrome do not compromise the safety of workers and aerodrome users.

The ARO and WSO roles are an essential part of the aerodrome operator's team and key contributors to the overall safety for aerodrome users.



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ARO RESPONSIBILITIES

AROs are primarily responsible for facilitating the safety of aerodrome operation, in compliance with the following requirements and systems:

- Part 139 (Aerodromes) Manual of Standards 2019
- Part 139 of the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (CASR) 'Aerodromes'
- Part 175 of CASR 'Aeronautical Information Management'
- Part 99 of CASR 'Drug and alcohol management plans and testing'
- relevant advisory circulars
- aerodrome manuals
- risk management and safety management systems, as applicable.

AROs inspect and report according to these standards, manuals and systems. Other related responsibilities could include amending aeronautical data information, such as raising Notices to Airmen (NOTAM).

ARO core responsibilities include:

- performing serviceability inspections to check runways for foreign object debris, pavement surface condition for defects, line marking and its condition, visual aids (powered and non-powered), off-aerodrome hazard and/or obstacle lighting, etc. These duties may have to be conducted under Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) procedures
- the review and recording of (in the serviceability report):
 - > changes to published aerodrome information in accordance with approved aviation publications and procedures
 - > aerodrome conditions such as weather, airside works and the works limits, NOTAMs, impacts to the obstacle limitation surfaces (OLS)
 - > wildlife monitoring and control
 - > positioning and checking temporary markers such as unserviceable markers and portable lights
 - > any other event or emergency affecting the availability of the aerodrome or safety of aircraft operations, including removal of disabled aircraft. These may be known ahead of time such as planned aerodrome works or discovered during an aerodrome inspection.

At some aerodromes, if detailed in the Aerodrome Emergency Plan (AEP), AROs may also need to initially respond to any incident at the aerodrome. As part of the aerodrome response, the ARO may need to:

- establish a forward command post
- initially secure the scene by setting up cordons
- effectively communicate the nature of the incident, safety hazards, and cordon placement (including unserviceable areas) to Air Traffic Control (ATC) and responding emergency service personnel
- provide airside access for emergency response agencies
- support and facilitate the emergency response agencies
- maintain airside security.

Further information can be found in 'Information and guidelines for aerodrome operators' on the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) website under 'Safety publications'.

This unique role may also require AROs to be 'on call' when not at the aerodrome for such things as medical emergency flights, emergency response, unscheduled night operations, adverse weather events, or the activation of the aerodrome lighting system.

An ARO may also perform other roles such as a grounds person, baggage handler, refueller, and security monitoring duties at some locations.



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SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Anyone wishing to become an ARO should possess good situational awareness and a range of role-specific technical skills.

AROs should also have personal qualities such as a willingness to learn, commitment, and enthusiasm to be successful in this role.

These qualities, along with good communication and people skills, will help AROs forge strong relationships, build trust, collaborate and work effectively as part of a team to enhance their performance, protect safety, and help build a healthy safety culture.

ARO-specific skills and knowledge

To be successful in the ARO role, it is important to have sound knowledge of:

- physical characteristics of aerodrome movement areas
- obstacle limitation surfaces
- aerodrome markings and markers
- lighting and ground signals
- off-aerodrome obstacle lights and their locations
- airside works and work site limits so that they don't impact aerodrome safety
- essential aerodrome safety equipment
- emergency planning and management
- wildlife hazard management
- vehicle and access control
- hazard reporting
- foreign object debris control
- spill management
- adverse weather response.

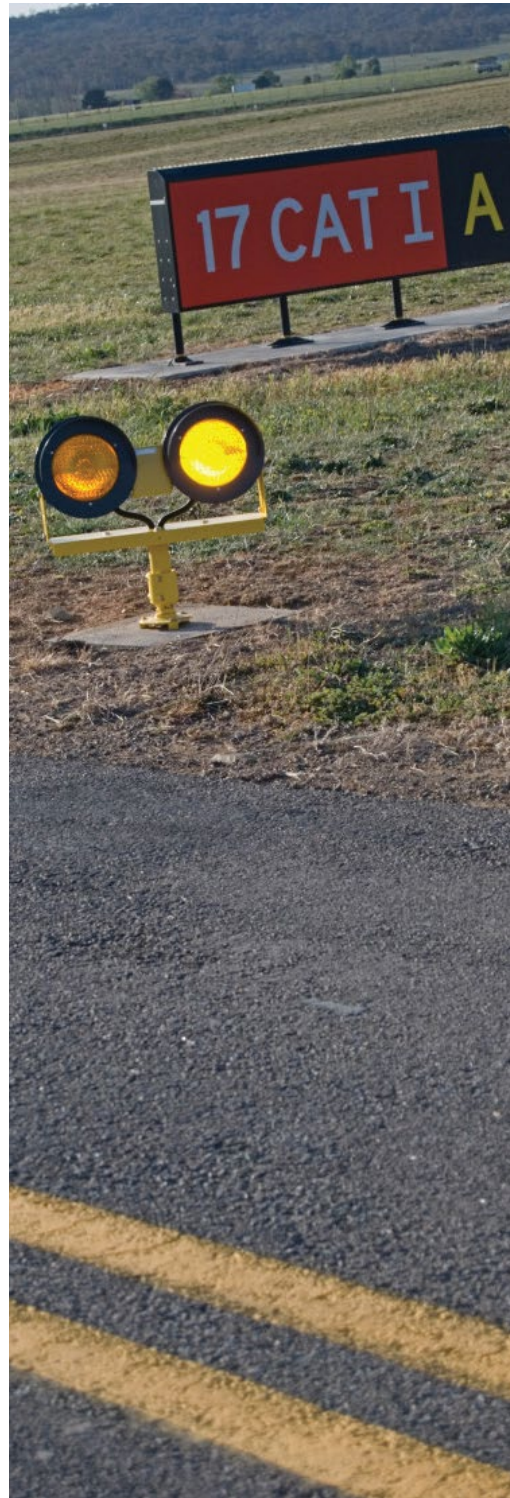


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AROs must also:

- understand the aerodrome information included in the En Route Supplement Australia (ERSA)
- be able to carry out serviceability inspections of the aerodrome
- be competent in radio operator communication, whether communicating via CTAF or with ATC
- have a working knowledge of the NOTAM system
- have good knowledge of aerodrome emergency procedures contained in the aerodrome manual and aerodrome emergency plan and regularly refresh these
- be able to identify and manage wildlife hazards, including competently and safely using firearms as part of the aerodrome's wildlife hazard mitigation strategies
- be able to carry out aerodrome reporting procedures
- maintain accurate and timely records
- complete all tasks in a timely manner including those with short timeframes.

Having a basic understanding of aircraft types and performance, the impacts of weather and environment, such as crosswind on landing performance, and aircraft procedures at an uncontrolled aerodrome can also help AROs in their role.



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ARO TRAINING

Aerodrome operators must not appoint a person as an ARO if they have not been formally trained and assessed as competent to perform their duties.

ARO training is completed through courses that teach candidates how to:

- operate an aeronautical radio, gaining their Aeronautical Radio Operator Certificate (AROC)
- conduct movement area and aerodrome infrastructure inspections, including the OLS
- report on the conditions of runways, navigational equipment, lighting systems, aerodrome facilities and the OLS
- supervise and facilitate the safety of aerodrome works and works site access
- conduct aerodrome visibility assessments (as applicable)
- participate in aerodrome emergency planning and response
- manage aerodrome wildlife hazards, including harassment and culling as required
- raise NOTAMs in line with Part 175 of the CASR
- drive and operate airside, maintaining situational awareness in an aviation workplace
- review the airside driving capability of other airside users who have applied for the 'Airside Driving Approval' (ADA)
- ensure the airfield is secured to prevent unauthorised airside access for humans and wildlife.

Training may be delivered either in-house or via a registered training organisation – provided key competencies are addressed.

Aviation is a dynamic environment and rules and technology change often. It is best practice for an ARO to complete recurrent training every 2 years (or earlier where procedures have changed) and maintain up-to-date records of this training. The period for completing recurrent training should not exceed 5 years.

If an ARO has not performed a task for a significant period, they should complete relevant refresher training before performing that task.

Higher qualifications, such as a Certificate III in Aviation (Aerodrome Operations) or management courses available through TAFE or university, enhance the skills and competence of an ARO. These qualifications can also lead to career advancement opportunities.

In addition to ensuring AROs are appropriately trained and qualified, aerodrome operators must document all procedures (including using checklists, reporting aerodrome changes, or requesting a NOTAM) in an aerodrome manual and make it available to the ARO.

At some aerodromes, AROs will also need to adhere to local council policies and procedures.

CHALLENGES IN THE ROLE OF AN ARO

At smaller airports it is not uncommon for an aerodrome manager to have multiple and diverse responsibilities, including being an ARO.

Sometimes the aerodrome manager may be the sole ARO, but others may be employed to assist.

Some of the other challenges faced by an ARO are not unique to aviation. These can be a lack of or difficult communication, complacency, and distractions. AROs also face a range of other work or non-work-related pressures, including stress, fatigue and a lack of awareness, knowledge or resources.



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This can greatly impact on safety and erode the high safety standards demanded in the aviation environment. Critical information may be missed or simply not passed on, for example issues with lighting (on and off airfield) or changes in the current wildlife status, unscheduled flights, aircraft fuel or sewage leaks, plant and equipment issues and weather condition changes such as low visibility (fog or smoke).

An ARO and their team must ensure that they are reporting issues internally, in accordance with procedures by including a detailed explanation and the causes (if known at that time), and also promptly initiating a NOTAM when required. Following-on from this, it is important to either provide a debrief on the issue or discuss the issue as a team to identify and agree solutions to prevent a recurrence of this incident and any other inadequately addressed issues. Include the safety manager and airside manager if you have one. This outcome should be documented. These incidents can also be used as an opportunity to train staff, update competency and improve safety.

Human errors contribute to more aircraft incidents and accidents than any other single factor. To help address this, checklists are used regularly in aviation.

AROs can use formal checklists to perform their daily tasks and can also use personal checklists, such as IMSAFE (see over page), in their daily routine, or in any task they do.

By having well-trained, educated, competent AROs who are equipped, empowered, encouraged and supported to do the best possible job they can, an aerodrome is well positioned to have a positive organisational safety culture and the highest possible safety standards.

IMSAFE stands for:

Illness – Are you currently feeling unwell or have you been sick?

Medication – Are you taking any prescription or over-the-counter medication, and how does it affect you? Is it compliant with the drug and alcohol management plan (DAMP)?

Stress – Are you experiencing psychological pressure or any anxiety?

Alcohol – When did you last consume alcohol or are you hungover?

Fatigue – Are you feeling tired or worn out? Are you adequately rested?

Eating – Have you eaten properly and are you properly hydrated? A can of red bull and some chocolate doesn't count as a nutritious meal!

REFERENCES

Advisory Circular – AC 139.C-02 v1.0
'Aerodrome Personnel'

Advisory Circular – AC 139.C-03 v1.0
'Serviceability Inspections'

Advisory Circular – AC 139.C-18 v1.0
'Aerodrome Emergency Planning'

Advisory Circular – AC 139.26(0) 'Wildlife
Hazard Management at Aerodromes'

Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB):
www.atsb.gov.au/publications

CASA website: www.casa.gov.au

Part 139 of the *Civil Aviation Safety
Regulations 1998* (CASR) 'Aerodromes'

Part 175 of CASR 'Aeronautical Information
Management'

Part 139 (Aerodromes) Manual of
Standards 2019

Advice also provided from:

Central Highlands Regional Council,
Toowoomba Regional Council, Torres
Shire Council

Archerfield Airport Corporation

casa.gov.au

