

Australian Government Civil Aviation Safety Authority



Operating at aircraft landing areas



There are thousands of aircraft landing areas (ALAs) in Australia, ranging from basic strips to those with facilities similar to certified aerodromes.

CASA provides safety guidance material for aerodrome owners, but we do not regulate aircraft landing areas. As pilot in command, you must ensure that any aircraft landing area you use is safe and appropriate for your operations.

DECIDING WHETHER TO USE AN AIRCRAFT LANDING AREA

When planning your flight, consider whether there is information in ERSA or other publications about the aircraft landing area you want to use and whether you need approval to use it.

Generally, you will need to contact the owner for approval. This gives you a chance to ask about:

- » The length, width and slope of the runway/s.
- » The elevation of the aerodrome.
- » The serviceability and condition of the runway and any associated equipment or facilities.
- » Any obstructions or other hazards such as wildlife, terrain or environmental conditions which may affect your operations.
- » Any other considerations that may affect your use of the aircraft landing area such as other operators or the mandatory carriage of radio.
- » Available aerodrome diagrams (noting this information may not come from an approved aviation data provider and may not be accurate, and maps may not be drawn to scale).

CHECKING AN AIRCRAFT LANDING AREA

It is critical that you check an aircraft landing area before you use it. You can do this by overflying the aerodrome and conducting a precautionary inspection. Use the following checklist as a guide.

- Wind strength and direction.
 Is there a windsock? Are there other visual indicators such as the movement of trees or smoke?
- Obstacles. Are there any obstacles in the undershoot or on the runway? Don't forget to think about the overshoot – you will also have to take off from the aircraft landing area.
- Size. Does the runway look like it matches the dimensions given to you by the owner?
- Shape. Is the landing direction suitable for the current wind?
- Slope. Is there any slope and will it affect your landing and future take-off?
- Surface. Is the surface suitable for your operations? Is it cultivated, wet or rocky? Are there any livestock, tyre tracks or ant hills? What else can you see?
- ✓ Sun. Will you be landing into it?
- Elevation. What are the key altitudes for the circuit? Will the elevation or other environmental conditions affect your aircraft performance?
- Terrain. Will the surrounding terrain affect your landing or a go-around?

casa.gov.au/avsafety



TAKE-OFF AND LANDING DECISION POINTS

Consider the same checklist and factors for your take-off. A good idea is to nominate specific points on the approach or runway as decision points where you will determine whether or not to continue with your approach or take-off. This will enable you to mentally prepare to go around or abort if you are not stable, have not touched down or have not yet become airborne.

COMMUNICATIONS

In non-controlled airspace, good pilot-to-pilot communication, or 'alerted see-and-avoid', allows all pilots to gain a picture of what is happening around them. To get this right you must be on the correct frequency, and know when to make radio calls and what to say.

- » Some owners may require you to carry and use a radio as a condition of using their aerodrome.
- » When operating in the vicinity of an aerodrome published on aeronautical charts, use the CTAF (126.7 MHz or the discrete frequency) as published.
- » Anywhere within a broadcast area, use the dedicated broadcast area CTAF.
- » In all other cases, it is recommended to listen and broadcast as necessary on the Area VHF. Under limited circumstances, such as multiple aircraft using the same uncharted ALA outside a CTAF or Broadcast Area, it may be appropriate for the pilots involved to use a frequency other than Area VHF (such as 126.7 MHz), in order to ensure safe operations. However, pilots undertaking these operations should be aware that overflying traffic will be on Area VHF. To ensure mutual traffic awareness. it is recommended that pilots using an alternative frequency also monitor Area VHF



Flying the Outback | Shelley Ross

DATA INTEGRITY

There are over 2,000 aircraft landing areas recorded in the Airservices aeronautical database and on charts. These may have verified or unverified data.

If you have information relating to an aircraft landing area (including contact details for an unverified aircraft landing area) please contact Airservices at

docs.amend@airservicesaustralia.com

FIND OUT MORE

Search for our *Be heard, be seen, be safe* – *radio procedures in non-controlled airspace* brochure online at **casa.gov.au**

Refer to AC 91-02 - Guidelines for aeroplanes with MTOW not exceeding 5700 kg - suitable places to take off and land.

