



# Preventing airspace infringements



Image: Airservices Australia

An airspace infringement (AI) is the unauthorised entry of an aircraft into controlled or restricted airspace without a clearance.

Controlled, restricted airspace and military operating areas are established due to the amount or type of traffic in the area, or the conduct of activities such as weapons firing, civil emergency or drone activity. Entering this airspace without a clearance reduces the safety to you and the other operators in the airspace.

In Australia, there are approximately 1,000 airspace infringements into civil or military airspace every year.

There are some common causes of airspace infringements. The following tips are intended to reduce your likelihood of having an infringement.

## PLAN YOUR FLIGHT (BEFORE YOU GO FLYING)

Don't just get in your aircraft and rely on your electronic flight bag to keep you safe.

- » Is there any controlled or special use airspace on, or near, your planned track?
- » Have you checked NOTAMs for restricted airspace or military operation area activations, or other information relevant to your flight?
- » Have you checked the weather? Will you have to track around weather and could this bring you closer to controlled or restricted airspace?
- » Are your airspace charts current?

## NAVIGATING

- » Know your position accurately relative to controlled, restricted airspace and military operating areas.
- » Add a buffer to your navigation tolerances near controlled and restricted airspace.
- » Your GPS may be accurate, but is your flying?
- » What if you have to avoid weather and you are near the boundary of airspace?
- » If in doubt about your position, ask Air Traffic Control (ATC) for assistance.

If operating close to controlled or restricted airspace, use PART to avoid an airspace infringement:



P – POSITION



A – ALTITUDE



R – RADIO



T – TRANSPONDER

### INCREASING YOUR VISIBILITY TO ATC

If you use your transponder, actively monitor the appropriate area frequency and submit a flight plan, there is more likelihood that ATC will be aware of your position and be able to provide assistance (or clearance) if required.

### DIVERTING IN-FLIGHT

Changing a pre-planned route often leads to unintentional airspace infringements, so take extra care when considering a diversion or route change.

If you require assistance with an in-flight diversion or a clearance request, contact ATC as soon as possible.

### REQUESTING CLEARANCE

Request a clearance well before reaching the controlled or restricted airspace step (five minutes prior is a good guide).

Have a contingency plan in case a clearance is not available.

### MILITARY CONTROLLED AND SPECIAL USE AIRSPACE

The Australian Defence Force uses a combination of controlled airspace (generally Class C) around their airbases. They will also activate special use airspace, including restricted, danger and military operating areas for operations and training.

### RESTRICTED AREAS

Restricted areas may be permanent or temporary and are not necessarily associated with military activity (for example, radiation hazards, or air displays). Any restricted area, including temporary restricted areas (TRA), can be made active at short notice.

### MILITARY OPERATING AREAS

Military operations areas (MOA) are generally established to encompass intensive military activities, including live firing. For non-participating aircraft, flight within an active MOA is generally only approved in exceptional circumstances.

MOA have the same entry approval requirements as Restricted Areas.



Image: Airservices Australia

When planning your flight, you may have to select the aerodrome location **AND** the restricted area group to receive NOTAMS for all of the airspace.



Just because military controlled airspace isn't active doesn't mean there are no military aircraft operating there. Use correct CTAF procedures.



As the status of military airspace can change at short notice, a good way to confirm the status while airborne is to listen to the ATIS.



EFBs might not display both restricted and controlled airspace and may also have a lag in their information updates (e.g. if an area is activated at short notice by NOTAM).

**Be aware that CTA steps may be based on various references including the aerodrome DME, the aerodrome reference point (ARP) or runway threshold. On the VTC the steps will refer to the datum used.**

**ATC are there to help. If you need assistance, are unsure of your position or the status of controlled or restricted airspace, ask ATC immediately.**