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**AIR NAVIGATION SERVICES**

**GENERAL**

☞ Indicates changes.

☞ This AIC replaces AIC 40-4 dated 01-07-15.

**THE APPLICATION OF THE TERMS VFR, VMC, IMC, IFR, SVFR**

1. The following is published to remind pilots of the applications of the above terms when flight plans are filed and flying is anticipated in marginal conditions.

☞ 1.1 **A VFR flight shall be conducted so that the aircraft is flown: -**

(a) With visual reference to the surface by day and to identifiable objects by night and at no time above more than three eighths of cloud within a radius of 5 NM of the aircraft in flight; and

(b) in conditions of visibility and distance from cloud equal to or greater than those specified below:-

<b>Airspace</b>	<b>Flight visibility</b>	<b>Distance from clouds</b>	<b>Ground visibility and ceiling</b>
Control zones <sup>(1)</sup>	Five km	Horizontally: 2 000 feet  Vertically: 500 feet	Except in a case mentioned in footnote <sup>(1)</sup> , no aircraft shall take-off from, land at, or approach to land at an aerodrome or fly within the control zone when the ground visibility at the aerodrome concerned is less than five km and the ceiling is less than 1 500 feet.
Within an aerodrome traffic zone (which does not also comprise a control zone or part of a control zone) or an aerodrome traffic area	Five km	Horizontally: 2 000 feet  Vertically: 500 feet	Except in a case mentioned in footnote <sup>(2)</sup> , no aircraft shall take-off from, land at, or approach to land at an aerodrome or fly within the aerodrome traffic zone or aerodrome traffic area when the ground visibility within such aerodrome traffic zone or aerodrome traffic area is less than five km and the ceiling is less than 1 500 feet.

**Footnotes:**

(1) Minima not applicable to special SVFR flights.

- (2) When a pilot in an aircraft maintains two-way radio communication with the aerodrome control tower or aerodrome flight information service unit, the pilot may, in respect of a cross-country flight, leave or enter the aerodrome traffic zone or aerodrome traffic area, as the case may be, when the ground visibility is equal to or greater than five km and the ceiling is equal to or higher than 500 feet.

<b>Airspace excluding control zones or aerodrome traffic zones or aerodrome traffic areas</b>	<b>Flight visibility</b>	<b>Distance from clouds</b>	<b>Ground visibility and ceiling</b>
At or below 1 000 feet above the surface, by day only	One and a half km	Clear of cloud	-
At or below 1500 feet above the surface, by night only	Five km	Horizontally: 2 000 feet  Vertically: 500 feet	-
From above 1 000 feet to 1 500 feet above the surface, by day only	Five km	Horizontally: 2 000 feet  Vertically: 500 feet	-
From above 1 500 feet above the surface up to and including flight level 100, by day and night	Five km	Horizontally: 2 000 feet  Vertically: 500 feet	-
From above flight level 100 up to and including flight level 200, by day and night	Eight km	Horizontally: One and a half km  Vertically: 10 00 feet	-
Above flight level 200, by day and night	Eight km	Horizontally: One and a half km  Vertically: 1 000 feet	VFR flights shall not be conducted above flight level 200. VMC minima for IFR flights shall be above flight level 200.

### HELICOPTER OPERATIONS

In the case of helicopters, under conditions of visibility and distance from cloud equal to, or greater than, those conditions specified in the following table: Provided that the limitations as contained in the above-mentioned table shall not prevent a helicopter from conducting hover-in-ground-effect or hover-taxi operations if the visibility is not less than 100 m.

<b>Airspace</b>	<b>Flight visibility</b>	<b>Distance from clouds</b>	<b>Ground visibility and ceiling</b>
Control zones <sup>(1)</sup>	Two and a half km	Horizontally: 1 000 feet  Vertically: Clear of cloud	Except in a case mentioned in footnote <sup>(1)</sup> , no helicopter shall take-off from, land at, or approach to land at an aerodrome or fly within the control zone when the ground visibility at the aerodrome concerned is less than 2,5 km and the ceiling is less than 600 feet.
Within an aerodrome traffic zone (which does not also comprise a control zone or part of a control zone) or an aerodrome traffic area	Two and a half km	Horizontally: 1 000 feet  Vertically: Clear of cloud	No helicopter shall take-off from, land at, or approach to land at an aerodrome or fly within the aerodrome traffic zone or an aerodrome traffic area when the
<b>Airspace</b>	<b>Flight visibility</b>	<b>Distance from</b>	<b>Ground visibility and ceiling</b>

		<b>clouds</b>	
<b>(Continued)</b>			ground visibility at the aerodrome concerned is less than 2,5 km and the ceiling is less than 600 feet..

<b>Airspace excluding control zones or aerodrome traffic zones or aerodrome traffic areas</b>	<b>Flight visibility</b>	<b>Distance from clouds</b>	<b>Ground visibility and ceiling</b>
At or below 1 500 feet above the surface, by day only	One km	Clear of cloud	-
At or below 1 500 feet above the surface, by night only	Five km	Clear of cloud	-
Above 1 500 feet above the surface, by day and night	Five km	Horizontally: 2 000 feet  Vertically: 500 feet	-

**Footnote:**

(1) Minima not applicable to SVFR flights.

**1.2 VMC**

When an aircraft is in Meteorological Conditions equal to or greater than those in the table above, the aircraft is said to be in Visual Met Conditions.

Note: A VFR flight must always be conducted in VMC.

**1.3 IMC**

When an aircraft is in Meteorological Conditions less than those in the table above, the aircraft is said to be in Instrument Met Conditions, and IFR will apply.

VFR flight is not permitted above FL200.

VFR flights may be granted SVFR clearances within a CTR in which case they are absolved from observing the weather minima for controlled airspaces whilst operating in the CTR on such clearances.

Unless authorised by ATC on a SVFR clearance no VFR flight shall take off from, land at, or approach to land at an aerodrome or fly within the control zone when the ground visibility at the aerodrome is less than 5km and the ceiling is less than 1, 500 ft.

When a Pilot in an aircraft maintains two-way radio communication with the aerodrome control tower or aerodrome flight information service unit, the Pilot may, in respect of a cross-country flight, leave or enter the aerodrome traffic zone or aerodrome traffic area, as the case may be, when the ground visibility is equal to or greater than five km and the ceiling is equal to or higher than 500 feet.

**Responsibility to ascertain whether VFR flight is permitted**

Outside a control zone or an aerodrome traffic zone or an aerodrome traffic area, the ascertainment of whether or not weather conditions permit flight in accordance with VFR, shall be the responsibility of the pilot-in-command of an aircraft, and whenever weather conditions do not permit a pilot to maintain the minimum distance from cloud and the minimum visibility required by VFR, the pilot shall comply with IFR.

The Civil Aviation Regulations do not forbid VFR flight by night, however, irrespective of the weather, ATC's should encourage all flights capable of operating under the IFR and intending to operate in any controlled or advisory airspace, except flights which do not intend leaving the aerodrome traffic circuit, to operate under the IFR.

1.4 **Special VFR(SVFR)**

A pilot –in-command may conduct SVFR operations in weather conditions below the prescribed conditions within a control zone provided that:-

- (a) under the terms of an air traffic control clearance;
- (b) by day only;
- (c) clear of clouds;
- (d) with a ceiling of at least 600 feet and visibility of at least 1 500 m;
- (e) in an aircraft equipped with two-way radio equipment capable of communicating with an air traffic service unit on the appropriate frequency; and
- (f) if leaving the control zone, in accordance with instructions issued by an air traffic service unit prior to departure.

Standard separation shall be provided between all SVFR flights and between SVFR flights and aircraft operating under the IFR.

IFR flights must not be delayed in order to accommodate requests for SVFR clearances.

Authorisation for SVFR flights will depend on local traffic conditions and other factors such as the extent of the flight proposed and whether air-ground communications can be maintained; i.e. it could require a shorter time interval between IFR flights to accommodate a SVFR flight which can maintain radio contact with APP and report positions etc., than one which cannot do so.

However, the fact that an aircraft has not got radio does not in itself exclude it from being granted a SVFR clearance.

ATC shall specify the conditions under which a SVFR flight may be made, eg. if the aircraft is equipped with R/T, ATC may specify that the pilot maintains radio guard and makes position reports while in the CTR, or ATC may prescribe the route to be followed by the aircraft. ATC may also place time restrictions on SVFR clearances, such as "Clearance expires .....", "Take-off not before.....", "Land not later than ....." etc.

Aircraft operating SVFR within a CTR when VMC no longer exists, will not normally be given a specific level to fly; they will merely be instructed to remain clear of clouds and within sight of ground. If, however, it is necessary to provide vertical separation from aircraft above, the SVFR aircraft is to be instructed not to fly above a specified level e.g. "Cleared ..... (route)..... SVFR clear of cloud in sight of ground, not above ..... feet".

SVFR flight is intended to provide flexibility to pilots who are unable to comply with IFR, and is a privilege NOT a right.

SVFR absolves the pilot-in-command from complying with the IFR, however, it does NOT absolve him from his responsibility of maintaining the minimum safe altitude prescribed in the CAR.

**NOTE:** SVFR does NOT apply outside of the CTR, i.e. in the FIR.

1.5 **Instrument Flight Rules**

Aircraft may be flown in accordance with the IFR irrespective of the meteorological conditions but all aircraft flying above FL200 must comply with the IFR.