

# AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR Y 9/2014

## UNITED KINGDOM

# NATS

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## POLICY FOR THE APPLICATION OF CALLSIGNS TO HELICOPTER EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE FLIGHTS

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this notice is to publicise the policy for the allocation of callsigns to Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) flights to aircraft operators and ATC providers.

### 2 HEMS Flights

- 2.1 A HEMS flight is a flight by a helicopter operating under a HEMS approval, the purpose of which is to facilitate emergency medical assistance, where immediate and rapid transportation is essential, by carrying:
- (a) Medical personnel; or
  - (b) medical supplies (equipment, blood, organs, drugs); or
  - (c) ill or injured persons and other persons directly involved.

### 3 Flight Category

- 3.1 The Flight Category is a priority status allocated to a flight by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) designed for use with tactical handling by ATC. There are 7 categories of flight as defined in MATS Pt 1 page 1-31. They are: Category A-E; Normal flights and Category Z. The flight categories relevant to HEMS operations are:
- (a) **Flight Category A** - the highest category of flight, applies to all HEMS flights, as defined at paragraph 2.1;
  - (b) **Flight Category E** - is authorised for use by an aircraft positioning for the purpose of conducting HEMS duties, eg returning to base after delivering a casualty to hospital. It is afforded priority over normal flights;
  - (c) **Flight Category Z** - is authorised for flights involving the training of crews for HEMS operations.

### 4 Callsign

- 4.1 A two-digit individual aircraft callsign is only to be used by the aircraft and aircraft operator to which it has been allocated by the Authority.
- 4.2 The full callsign for a HEMS flight will consist of three elements:
- (a) The radiotelephony callsign 'HELIMED' is to be used for all UK HEMS Flights. This callsign is registered with ICAO as 'UK HEMS'. The ICAO three-letter operator designator is 'HLE';
  - (b) A two-digit individual aircraft identifier is allocated to each HEMS aircraft by Airspace Section of the Safety and Airspace Regulation Group (SARG);
  - (c) The two-digit identifier is to be suffixed with the Flight Category letter 'A' when on an emergency flight to highlight to the ATS provider the priority status requested by the pilot.
- 4.3 Callsigns for HEMS flights will either be:
- (a) On emergency operational tasks: 'HELIMED 01A';
  - (b) On routine operational, training or other flights; 'HELIMED 01'.
- 4.4 Two-digit individual aircraft callsigns will be allocated in such a manner so as to prevent as far as practicable confusion with callsigns applied to Police Air Support Units.

## 5 Callsign Management

5.1 The Airspace Section of the Safety and Airspace Regulation Group is responsible for the allocation and management of HEMS callsigns. Requests for permanent or temporary two-digit individual aircraft callsigns, and changes to or cancellation of these are to be submitted to:

Post: Airspace Section  
Safety & Airspace Regulation Group  
CAA House  
45-59 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6TE

Phone: 020-7453 6553

Fax: 020-7453 6565

Email: [airspace@caa.co.uk](mailto:airspace@caa.co.uk)