

AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR W 020/2026

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NOTIFICATION OF THE CAA INTENT TO AMEND IDENTIFICATION CODES FOR AIRSPACE RESTRICTIONS THAT ONLY APPLY TO UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

1 Introduction

As previously communicated in AIC W 154/2025, the CAA intends to amend the identification codes currently assigned to airspace restrictions that apply only to Unmanned Aircraft Systems. These are published in the UK Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) in Part 2-ENR 5.1 (Prohibited, Restricted and Danger Areas). However, the identification format for these areas is not in conformance with ICAO and Eurocontrol requirements. These requirements have been incorporated into CAA Policy 133: Policy for the Establishment and Operation of Special Use Airspace, in effect since February 2024, so this change will also ensure alignment with UK policy. This proposal only impacts the technical identification code of the airspace structures, their names will be unaffected.

2 Background

The CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS) seeks to reduce risk and maintain a high standard of safety in the UK through simplification and harmonisation of the notified airspace design. One of the key aspects, which itself is derived from the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan, is the provision of digitised aeronautical data that can be consumed by users through market-developed tools and applications through a system that supports the secure exchange of data. As such, it is important for aeronautical data to be published in a compliant and harmonised manner.

The protocol for determining the identification of the UAS-only airspace restrictions was developed such that a distinct data set could be created. This has resulted in the 'EGRU' set of restricted areas, which are established at government airfields, civil-licensed airfields, and other sites such as HM Prisons.

The European Route Network Development Plan (ERNIP) Part 1 describes a harmonised method for publication of airspace restrictions. This protocol is designed to meet ICAO requirements and ensure a harmonised approach across the European network, thereby enabling successful integration of aeronautical data into national and international systems. This protocol is described for UK use in SARG Policy 133; many airspace structures are already compliant with the protocol (eg all other danger areas, restricted areas and prohibited areas), but others require alignment; work is taking place as part of the CAA's work on improving the quality of the AIP. Further, with an increase in the number of areas being implemented due to the National Security Act 2023, it is imperative that a new identification protocol is introduced to ensure sufficient codes are available.

3 The Proposal

Instead of identification codes starting with 'EGRU' followed by a 3-digit number, this proposal means they will start with 'EGR' then a single digit number that relates to the latitude, followed by 'U' and a three-digit number. Where a site requires multiple areas, these will be designated by letters as they are now (but not including I, O or Z). This revised protocol still provides a difference in coding to all other restricted airspace volumes ie instead of 'EGRU', the identification will start 'EGRnU' where 'n' indicates that latitude swathe. All other restricted areas are denoted by 'EGR' and a 3-digit number, where the first digit relates to the latitude swathe eg EGR107.

COUNTRY IDENT	TYPE	LATITUDE	UNIQUE CODE FOR UAS-ONLY AREA	SUB DIV (optional)	NAME
2 letters: EG	1 letter: R	1 number: 1-9	Letter 'U' followed by 3-number code	Letters (not I, O or Z)	No change

The use of the latitude band to provide a regional location in the codes is not new and will be retained with this proposal. Noting that the UK is only able to publish airspace restrictions in UK airspace, these are generally denoted as:

1. up to 51°N
2. from 52°N to below 53°N
3. from 53°N to below 54°N

4. from 54°N to below 55°N
5. from 55°N to below 56°N
6. from 56°N to below 57°N
7. from 57°N to below 58°N
8. from 58°N to below 59°N
9. 59°N and above

Two options were considered for determining the 3-digit codes. Option 1 retains the three-digit number currently used; Option 2 restarts the numbering system relative to the latitude. From a compliance and systems perspective there are no issues with either option. The CAA intends to implement Option 2 as this provides benefits for managing the increasing number of areas.

4 Engagement Activities

Discussions took place across relevant CAA departments to confirm the need for the change and to develop the options for the new identifications. Through the CAA's Aeronautical Information Management Regulatory (AIMR) team, the topic was discussed with the UK's Aeronautical Information Service (AIS) provider, and the proposal was then presented at two routine AIS User Forum meetings. A short consultation was carried out with Forum members where no anticipated issues have been raised. AIC W 154/2025 was issued by the CAA on 21 Aug 25 to more broadly circulate the intent, with no feedback received.

5 Next Steps

The draft revised codes are presented in Appendix A; if any issues or errors are detected, these should be reported directly to the CAA via email (see contact details below) at the earliest opportunity. **The codes are presented for reference and forward planning only and must not be used operationally; the information presented in the AIP remains the official data source.**

We intend to establish the new identification codes in AIRAC 05/2026, which will be published on **2 April 2026** and becomes effective from **14 May 2026**. Any queries regarding this proposal should be addressed to airspace.Policy@caa.co.uk.

6 APPENDIX A – DRAFT LIST OF PROPOSED NEW IDENTIFICATION CODES

The draft list of proposed new identification codes can be found at the following URL:

http://www.nats.aero/ais/uas_area_designators