

Australian Ballooning Federation

# PILOTS CIRCULAR

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*Pilots Circular is produced by the Australian Ballooning Federation Inc., and contains operational and safety information for all Australian balloonists. ABF pilot and student pilot members receive Pilots Circular (and a PC folder) by post as part of their annual membership. PC is also available on the ABF website [www.abf.net.au](http://www.abf.net.au) for all to read.*

***This issue of PC is being sent to all members – crew as well as pilots should be aware of the airspace changes.***

*All ABF members – from the newest student to the most experienced pilot – are invited to contribute to PC on issues you feel other pilots may wish to know about, or to raise questions that you would like information about.*

*Thanks to all the pilots around Australia and others who have contributed to this issue.*

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## ATTENTION ALL BALLOON PILOTS

### OPERATIONS AT NON-TOWERED AERODROMES NOV 24 AIRSPACE CHANGES

Changes to airspace and radio procedures at and near aerodromes **will affect all aircraft including balloons**. From 24 November 2005 you must know and follow the new procedures, which are stage 2c of NAS, the National Airspace System.

Pilots - if you have received the NAS package 'Operations at Non-Towered Aerodromes', **read the booklet thoroughly** – the DVD is also useful. If not, call 1800 007 024 for a copy or visit their website\*. (Note: references marked \* are listed at the end of this article.)

The information on the next 3 pages is a summary of the main changes as they affect balloon pilots – page numbers refer to the NAS booklet.

## New procedures from 24 November 2005:

- MBZ (Mandatory Broadcast Zones) will no longer exist
- New procedures will apply to all ‘non-towered aerodromes’ (ie where there is no control tower or the tower is not operational at that time)
- All aerodromes will have a CTAF (Common Traffic Advisory Frequency) for pilots to make radio broadcasts. Existing frequencies will continue to be used. If no frequency is published, use 126.7. If (R) is shown in brackets after the frequency, all aircraft must use radio – however **balloons still require radio within 10NM of virtually all aerodromes whether indicated by (R) or not** (see pilot notes below).
- There will be no horizontal or vertical boundaries for CTAF. Airspace charts will change – you will need to get new charts. Broadcasts should be made as necessary while operating within 10NM of an aerodrome.
- Arriving aircraft will make a first broadcast by 10NM from the aerodrome (note this is twice the distance of the current CTAF boundary system), even further away (25 NM to 30NM) for high performance aircraft.
- All aircraft with radio can make a straight-in approach (see page 11).
- For aircraft which use the aerodrome circuit, there are preferred ways for them to join and leave the circuit. Different circuit heights are defined by performance rather than aircraft type (see pages 8 and 9).
- ‘All stations’ will no longer be used to begin a broadcast. The new format for position reports starts with the aerodrome location followed by ‘traffic’, and repeats the location at the end (see page 6, and example below). ‘CTAF’ is not said in the broadcast.
- Instead of automatically responding to a broadcast from another aircraft, you must now use your judgement as to whether it is necessary for you to broadcast, as appropriate to maintain safety and avoid potential conflict. To do this you need to understand the aerodrome traffic pattern and anticipate the position of other aircraft from the information in their broadcasts. It will also be very useful to know the likely approach speed of other aircraft so you know if it is appropriate to broadcast and/or to position your balloon to avoid conflict if necessary.

## What to do as a balloon pilot from 24 November

- Be familiar with the information in the NAS stage 2c package. In particular understand aerodrome circuits, typical aircraft movements and broadcasts, aircraft types and speeds.
- Buy new charts for your flying areas\*. Always use current maps and charts. Add new airspace information to your flying maps if necessary.
- Identify any aerodrome within 30NM of where you plan to fly. Note the CTAF frequency from charts or ERSA\*. Note the runway layout and other details from ERSA. Familiarise with the typical flying activities at your local aerodrome.
- Obtain NOTAM\* for the aerodrome and your flying area (you should be doing this already).
- Identify aerodromes with an instrument approach procedure (ie if listed in DAP\* and that’s virtually all aerodromes now). **DO NOT fly within 10NM of an aerodrome with an instrument approach procedure) unless you carry and use radio.** This rule remains unchanged.
- **DO NOT fly below 2000ftAGL within 3NM of ANY aerodrome as a private pilot unless you have written CASA approval.** This rule and other requirements of AIP\* ENR 5.5 remain unchanged.
- Maintain a listening watch on the CTAF frequency rather than the area frequency when within 30NM of an aerodrome. Make position reports if taking off within 10NM, flying inside 10NM, and as necessary to maintain safety.

- Use the new ‘traffic’ format for broadcasts instead of ‘all stations’ and say the location at the start and end of your message.
- Stay clear of cloud and within VMC rules for balloons (see AIP\* or your VFR Flight Guide\*).
- Be especially aware when overflying an aerodrome (see page 15).
- If you are flying in a control zone (this still requires CASA written approval if you are a private pilot) use the new procedures when the tower is not operational.

### **Other traffic to consider**

- IFR equipped aircraft may make an instrument approach even in ideal visual conditions. They will use a runway which is IFR equipped, not necessarily the same runway used by other traffic. They may appear through cloud without warning (pages 12-13).
- Note any other aviation activities listed on charts and ERSA in the vicinity of the aerodrome (examples pages 24-31). Helicopters may arrive and depart from various directions. Parachuting may be done through cloud in some cases – be aware of their operations, stay 5NM clear if possible, make appropriate broadcasts.

### **But I don’t own or use a VHF radio**

If you don’t yet have a VHF airband radio or approval to operate it, we suggest you get started soon. The ABF expects to make it a requirement for all pilots before long. The ABF Radio Operator Certificate is ideal for private balloon pilots – equivalent in status to a CASA radio licence but more specific to ballooning. ABF study notes are being finalised, and all ABF members will be advised when they are available.

If you are buying a VHF radio, shop around and discuss useful features. Make sure the radio you have (or buy) has 25Khz channel spacing as this feature will be required from 2009, at least in high density use areas.

### **New broadcast format**

‘All stations’ will no longer be used to begin a broadcast. Instead, The new standard broadcast format includes the word ‘traffic’ and the location is spoken twice, as follows:

<Location> Traffic  
<Aircraft type>  
<Call sign>  
<Position/intentions>  
<Location>

Examples:

Balloon overflying Parkes aerodrome (formerly a CTAF with radius 5NM).

*“Parkes traffic, balloon Bravo Alpha Golf, 3 miles north, tracking south, not below two thousand, Parkes.”*

In this case you have made it clear you are remaining above the circuit height of 1500ft AGL which applies to high-performance aircraft, so should not conflict with them while they are in the circuit, taking off or landing.

Balloon entering within 10NM of Mildura aerodrome (formerly an MBZ with radius 15NM).

*“Mildura traffic, balloon Bravo Alpha Golf, airborne 10 miles southeast, tracking west, not above one thousand, for local flight Mildura.”*

If you decide to fly above 1000ftAGL you should broadcast this if there is other traffic at that time which may be affected.

### **\*More information**

**National Airspace System** - [www.dotars.gov.au/airspacereform](http://www.dotars.gov.au/airspacereform). You can download the NAS booklet from this site or call the Airspace Reform hotline 1800 007 024 for a hard copy of the NAS package.

**Purchase charts** at [www.airservices.gov.au/store/default.asp](http://www.airservices.gov.au/store/default.asp) or phone 1300 306 630.

**View or download AIP, ERSA, DAP** at <http://www.airservices.gov.au/publications/>

**Get NOTAM** at [www.airservices.gov.au/brief/default.asp](http://www.airservices.gov.au/brief/default.asp). You will need to register (free) here if you have not used this service before. When registering, if you do not have an ARN (Aviation Reference Number) leave this space blank or enter your ABF membership number. If that does not work, call 1800 801 960 all hours and register by phone.

**VFR Flight Guide** (Sept 2001 issue) has been sent by the ABF to all certificate holders, and is still generally current.

**Other queries** – call the hotline or call or email ABF Operations Manager Ian Hogben or Training Officer Simon Fisher.