



Camden Air Traffic Control

Newsletter

25 August 2006



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Welcome to Camden from your friendly team of Air Traffic Controllers who reside in the Control Tower at the western area of the complex. We have decided to publish this newsletter as an adjunct to the other publications that allow you to safely and enjoyably fly to and from this semi-rural airport.

Last newsletter alluded to coverage of the term '***Restricted VFR Operations***' that ATC may include as part of the ATIS or via directed AGA transmission. As part of this newsletter, we will attempt to clarify some misconceptions that may be out there about what the term means and its implications on our flying activities.

AIP ENR 1.1-46 para 24.2 (b) covers the circumstances when ATC may instigate Restricted VFR Operations. It suggests that the restrictions to VFR aircraft may be weather related, however there are many times when ***Restricted VFR Operations*** may be imposed on clear CAVOK days. How can this be? The answer is both simple and complicated. Let's look at the simple circumstance first.

The time is 0000UTC or ten o'clock local in the morning. It is raining, the cloud is BKN012, wind 250/05 and visibility is 4500RASH. Not a good day for VFR flying. Sounds like a great day for IFR training or partaking of hot soup with chunky bread. One would expect that arrivals would be via an instrument approach and departures would be on instruments shortly after takeoff.

Despite what a lot of aviators think, ATC does not have the authority to deny flight. The responsibility for making that decision rests solely with





the pilot in command. ATC does however, have the authority to delay or organise flight in such a way that there will be minimal impact or delay to IFR flight. This is where ***Restricted VFR Operations*** come into play.

We ATC operatives are charged with organising matters such that we can accommodate IFR arrivals and departures with minimal delay. We do this by reducing (restricting) the amount and complexity of VFR traffic under our control. An example with the weather conditions being discussed here could be that there is an IFR C340 arriving via an NDB Approach with an estimate for the aid of 0025UTC. At a predetermined time prior to this estimate, the Tower takes action to restrict the VFR operations. Circuit operations would be ceased and delay times advised to those affected aircraft. On completion of the IFR arrival, VFR operations may resume. The operations under the weather conditions suggested above are reasonably straightforward. What happens in fine weather conditions?

The time is 0000UTC, wind 250/05 and CAVOK. It is Saturday morning and everyone has broken open their piggy banks and has decided to go flying. The Tower Controllers are drinking coffee at an alarming rate as the airfield surface disappears under swarms of light aircraft.

There is a certain limit to the number of aircraft that can be safely accommodated in any given piece of airspace. That number can also be affected by the individual controllers and pilots skills at any given time. When the limit is reached, some form of restriction must take place or we may reach a point where 'safety assurance' is compromised. If an ATC compromises 'safety assurance' he/she can expect some form of fairly harsh action from various organisations such as Airservices Australia, CASA and other affected agencies. It is definitely not a trivial matter.

When the limit is approaching or has been reached, ATC may directly communicate the restriction to affected aircraft with information such as '*circuit operations are restricted. Contact ground from the run up bay for expected delay times*', or the ATIS may be changed to include '***Restricted VFR Operations***'. ATC now has the legal right to reduce, delay or restrict VFR operations within the GAAP Control Zone. You will not encounter VMC '***Restricted VFR Operations***' very much at Camden but you will certainly experience it at Bankstown when the traffic numbers have gone ballistic on a Saturday or Sunday.

Restricted VFR Operations should not be confused with ***Special VFR***. Special VFR refers to weather conditions only that are less than those





required for flight in VMC. When you are operating under conditions of '***Restricted VFR Operations***' caused by large numbers of VFR activities, it is not necessary for you to be considering requesting a ***Special VFR Clearance***. Confused? Talk to an Instructor and all will be revealed.

On the social front, Mike is off to YMML for a month to present a training course at the TAAATS Centre at Tullamarine and to visit some of the terrific eateries on Lygone Street. One of our lady Controllers is off to the US for a 'Trekkies' convention in New York and to visit relatives in Kentucky and California. If only I could get my daughter to mow the grass, life would be so sweet.

Talk to you on 121.9, 120.1 or even on 281.

Mike

PS Got a few friends who can save up and share some flying time? Want a fantastic place to visit by air? Got 3 days off work or just won Lotto? Consider a 3 day flight with friends to the Noccundra Hotel in far SW Queensland and you will NOT be disappointed. It's on the Wilson River. It's a wonderful, typical old outback pub in land as flat as a tack and the owners are terrific. I don't have any vested interest in the place but just think it is symbolic of what our country is all about. The next newsletter will be out sometime in October.

