

ENR 1.3 Instrument Flight Rules

1. General

Instrument Flight Rules are prescribed in the Irish Aviation Authority (Rules of the Air) Order

2. Rule 27. Air Traffic Control Clearance

2.1. Clearances issued by air traffic control units shall provide separation:

- a) between all flights in Class A and B airspaces;
- b) between IFR flights in Class C, D and E airspaces;
- c) between IFR flights and VFR flights in Class C airspace;
- d) between IFR flights and special VFR flights;
- e) between special VFR flights;

except that when requested by an aircraft and, if so prescribed by the appropriate ATS authority for the case listed under subparagraph (b) of this paragraph, a flight may be cleared without separation being so provided in respect of a specific portion of the flight conducted in Visual Meteorological Conditions in Class D or Class E airspace.

- 2.2. Prior to operating a controlled flight or a portion of a flight as a controlled flight in controlled airspace, an air traffic control clearance shall be obtained by the pilot-in command from the appropriate air traffic control unit through the submission of a flight plan covering the flight or portion of the flight.
- 2.3. The clearance issued by an air traffic control unit may be limited to cover only a part of a current flight plan and this will be indicated by the inclusion of a reference to a clearance limit or by reference in the clearance to a particular manoeuvre such as taxiing, landing or take-off.
- 2.4. If an air traffic control clearance is not satisfactory to the pilot-in-command of an aircraft, he may request the appropriate air traffic control unit to amend the clearance and if practicable, to issue him with such amended clearance.
- 2.5. Whenever an aircraft has requested a clearance involving priority, a report explaining the necessity for such priority shall be submitted if requested by the appropriate air traffic control unit.
- 2.6. An aircraft operated on a controlled aerodrome shall not taxi on the manoeuvring area without clearance from the aerodrome control tower and shall comply with any instructions given by that unit.

3. Rule 28 Adherence to and Changes to Flight Plan

3.1.

- a) Subject to paragraph (2) of this Rule, a change shall not be made to the current flight plan or the applicable portion of a current flight plan submitted for a controlled flight unless a request for such change has been made to, and clearance obtained from, the appropriate air traffic control unit, or unless an emergency situation arises which necessitates immediate action by the aircraft and in such event, as soon as circumstances permit, after such emergency action is exercised, the appropriate air traffic services unit shall be notified of the action taken and if necessary a clearance shall be obtained therefrom for any change effected;
- b) Unless otherwise authorised or directed by the appropriate air traffic control unit, controlled flights shall, in so far as practicable:

- i. when on an established ATS route, operate along the defined centre line of that route, or
- ii. when on any other route, operate directly between the navigation facilities and/or points defining that route. Deviation from the requirements in clauses (i) and (ii) of this subparagraph shall be notified to all appropriate air traffic services units;
- c) Subject to the overriding requirements in subparagraph (b) of this Rule, an aircraft operating along an ATS route segment defined by reference to very high frequency omni-directional radio ranges shall change over for its primary navigation guidance from the facility behind the aircraft to that ahead of the aircraft at, or as close as operationally feasible to, the change-over-point, where established.

3.2. Inadvertent Changes

Where an aircraft when on a controlled flight inadvertently deviates from its current flight plan, the following action shall be taken:

- a) Deviation from Track. If the aircraft is off track, action shall be taken forthwith to adjust the heading of the aircraft to regain track as soon as practicable;
- b) Variation in True Airspeed. If the average true airspeed at cruising level between reporting points varies or is expected to vary by plus or minus five per cent of the true airspeed, from that given in the flight plan, the appropriate air traffic services unit shall be so informed;
- c) Change in Estimated Times. If the estimated time at the next applicable reporting point, flight information region boundary, or aerodrome of intended landing, (whichever comes first) is found to be in error in excess of three minutes from that notified to air traffic services, or by such other period of time as is prescribed by the appropriate ATS authority, or on the basis of regional air navigation agreements, a revised estimated time shall be notified as soon as possible to the appropriate air traffic services unit;
- d) When an ADS agreement is in place, the air traffic services unit concerned shall be informed automatically via data link whenever changes occur beyond the threshold values stipulated by the ADS event contract.

3.3. Intended Changes

Requests for flight plan changes shall include information as indicated hereunder:

- a) Change of Cruising Level
Aircraft identification; requested new cruising level and cruising speed at this level; revised estimated time (when applicable) at subsequent flight information region boundaries;
- b) Change of Route
- iii. Destination unchanged. Aircraft identification; flight rules; description of new route of flight, including related flight plan data beginning with the time and position from which requested change of route is to commence; revised estimated time at destination; any other pertinent information,
- iv. Destination changed. Aircraft identification; flight rules; description of new route of flight to new destination including related flight plan data, beginning with the time and position from which requested change of route is to commence; estimated time of arrival at new destination; alternate aerodrome(s); any other pertinent information.

3.4. Weather deterioration below VMC

When it becomes evident to the pilot-in-command of an aircraft being operated as a controlled VFR flight that flight in VMC in accordance with the current flight plan will not be practicable, he shall:

- a) request an amended clearance to enable the aircraft to continue in VMC to destination or to an alternate aerodrome, or leave the controlled airspace concerned; or

- b) if no clearance in accordance with subparagraph (a) of this paragraph can be obtained, continue to operate in VMC and notify the appropriate air traffic control unit of the action being taken either to leave the controlled airspace concerned or to land at the nearest suitable aerodrome; or
- c) if operating in a control zone, request authorisation to operate as a special VFR flight; or
- d) if appropriately qualified and the aircraft is appropriately equipped to comply with the Instrument Flight Rules, request clearance to operate in accordance with those rules.

3.5. Position Reports

- a) Unless exempted by the appropriate ATS authority for the provision of air traffic services in the airspace concerned, or by the appropriate air traffic services unit under conditions issued by that authority, a controlled flight shall report to the appropriate air traffic services unit by radio as soon as possible:
 - i. the time and level of passing each designated compulsory reporting point, together with any other required information,
 - ii. position reports shall similarly be made in relation to other additional reporting points when requested by the appropriate air traffic services unit,
 - iii. in the absence of designated reporting points, position reports shall be made at intervals prescribed by the appropriate ATS authority for the provision of air traffic services in the airspace concerned or by the appropriate air traffic services unit;
- b) If an aircraft is unable to communicate by radio, it shall comply with such reporting procedures as may be prescribed;
- c) Controlled flights providing position information to the appropriate air traffic services unit via data-link communications shall only provide voice position reports when requested.

4. Rule 29 Arrival and Departure of Aircraft

- 4.1. If points between or over which aircraft, arriving within the State from abroad or leaving the State for abroad shall pass have been prescribed, every aircraft arriving in the State from abroad or leaving the State for abroad shall, save as hereinafter provided, pass between or over such points.
- 4.2. Where any aircraft is compelled by an obstacle thereto or by reason of weather conditions or unavoidable cause to enter the State from abroad elsewhere than between or over any such prescribed points such aircraft shall notify the appropriate air traffic services unit as soon as practicable.
- 4.3. Termination of Control
 - a) The pilot-in-command of a controlled flight shall, except when landing at a controlled aerodrome, advise the appropriate air traffic control unit as soon as the flight ceases to be subject to air traffic control service;
 - b) A controlled flight operating in Visual Meteorological Conditions shall continue to be operated as a controlled flight unless otherwise authorised by the appropriate air traffic control unit.

5. Rule 30. Communications

- 5.1. An aircraft flown as a controlled flight shall maintain a continuous air-ground voice communication watch on the appropriate communication channel and establish two-way communication, as necessary, with the appropriate air traffic control unit, except in a case where the appropriate ATS authority has prescribed otherwise in respect of aircraft forming part of aerodrome traffic at a controlled aerodrome.

- 5.2. Where so prescribed by the appropriate ATS authority, the use of automatic signalling devices such as SELCAL, shall be deemed to satisfy the requirement to maintain a continuous listening watch.
- 5.3. The requirement for an aircraft to maintain air-ground voice communication watch remains in effect after CPDLC has been established.
- 5.4. An aircraft operating under IFR outside controlled airspace and required by the appropriate ATS authority to submit a flight plan and to maintain a continuous air ground voice communication watch on the appropriate communication channel and establish two-way communication, as necessary, with the air traffic services unit providing flight information service, shall report its position as required by Rule 28(5) of these Rules.

6. Rule 31. Communications Failure

6.1. Air/Ground

- c) If an aircraft fails to establish contact with an aeronautical station on the radio frequency designated by the appropriate authority, it shall attempt to establish contact on another frequency appropriate to the route being flown;
- d) If the said attempt fails, the aircraft shall attempt to establish communication with other aircraft or other aeronautical stations (including where applicable, ocean station vessels) and if operating within a radio communications network shall monitor the appropriate VHF frequency for calls from nearby aircraft;
- e) If the attempts set out in subparagraphs (a) and (b) fail, the aircraft shall transmit its message twice on the radio frequencies designated by the appropriate authority preceded by the phrase "Transmitting blind" and including the addressees for whom the message is intended;
- f) If the aircraft is operating within a radio communications network, a message preceded by the phrase "Transmitting blind" shall be transmitted twice on both the primary and secondary radio frequencies appropriate to the radio network, and before changing from one frequency to another the frequency to which the change is made shall be announced. To indicate that it is experiencing a radio failure, an aircraft equipped with a secondary surveillance radar (SSR) transponder shall operate the equipment on Mode A, Code 7600.

6.2. Receiver failure

- a) When an aircraft is unable to establish radio communication by reason of the failure of a radio receiver in the aircraft, it shall transmit reports at the times and positions on the frequency in use, as scheduled by the appropriate authority, preceded by the phrase "Transmitting blind due to receiver failure", and shall then transmit the intended message followed by a complete repetition of the transmission and including a reference to the time of its next intended transmission;
- b) An aircraft which is being provided with air traffic control service or air traffic advisory service shall, in addition to complying with the provision of paragraph (1) of this Rule, transmit information conveying the intentions of the pilot-in-command concerning the continuation of the flight of the aircraft.

6.3.

- a) If a radio communications failure precludes compliance with Rule 30, the aircraft shall, in addition to complying with such provisions of paragraphs (1) and (2) of this Rule as may be feasible and appropriate, comply with such of the other provisions of this paragraph as may be feasible and appropriate, and if forming part of the aerodrome traffic at a controlled aerodrome, shall keep a watch for the observation of such instructions as may be issued by the aerodrome control tower by means of visual signals;
- b) If an aircraft is flying in Visual Meteorological Conditions, it shall continue to fly in Visual Meteorological Conditions to, and land at the nearest suitable aerodrome, and report its arrival to the

appropriate air traffic control unit by the quickest means available.

- 6.4. If an aircraft is flying in Instrument Meteorological Conditions or in weather in which it does not appear feasible to complete the flight in compliance with the provisions of subparagraph (3)(b) of this Rule, the aircraft shall:
- a) unless otherwise prescribed on the basis of a regional air navigation agreement, maintain the last assigned speed and level, or minimum flight altitude if higher, for a period of 20 minutes following the aircraft's failure to report its position over a compulsory reporting point and thereafter adjust level and speed in accordance with the filed flight plan;
 - b) proceed according to the current flight plan route to the appropriate designated navigational aid serving the destination aerodrome and hold over this aid until commencement of descent, when required to ensure compliance with subparagraph (c) of this paragraph;
 - c) commence descent from the navigational aid specified in subparagraph (b) of this paragraph at, or as close as possible to, the expected approach time last received and acknowledged, or, if no expected approach time has been received and acknowledged, at, or as close as possible to the estimated time of arrival resulting from the current flight plan;
 - d) complete a normal instrument approach procedure designated as appropriate for the said navigational aid; and
 - e) land, if possible, within thirty minutes after the estimated time of arrival as indicated in the filed flight plan and revised in accordance with the current flight plan, or the last acknowledged expected approach time whichever is later.

7. Rule 32. Instrument Approach Procedure

An aircraft shall, unless otherwise authorised by the appropriate air traffic control unit, follow the normal instrument approach procedures for the aerodrome to be used.

8. Rule 36. Aircraft equipment

Aircraft shall be equipped with suitable instruments and with radio and navigation equipment appropriate to the route and the airspace to be flown.

9. Rule 37. Minimum Levels

Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 3 an IFR flight shall be flown at a level which is not lower than the minimum flight altitude established by the state whose territory is being overflown, except when necessary for taking-off or landing at an aerodrome, unless authorised by the appropriate authority, or, where no such minimum flight altitude has been established:

- 9.1. over high terrain or in mountainous areas, at a level which is at least 600 metres (2,000 ft) feet above the highest obstacle located within 8 km (5NM), of the estimated position of the aircraft.
- 9.2. elsewhere than as described in subparagraph (1) at a level which is at least 300 metres (1,000 ft) above the highest obstacle located within 8 km (5NM), of the estimated position of the aircraft. In estimating the position of the aircraft for the purpose of compliance with this Rule, account shall be taken of the navigational accuracy which can be achieved on the relevant segment of the route being flown, having regard to the navigational facilities available on the ground and on board the aircraft.

10. Rule 38. Change from IFR flight to VFR flight

- 10.1. An aircraft electing to change the conduct of its flight from compliance with the Instrument Flight Rules to compliance with the Visual Flight Rules shall, if a flight plan was submitted, notify the appropriate air traffic services unit that the IFR flight plan is cancelled and communicate thereto the changes to be made to its current flight plan.

- 10.2. When an aircraft operating under the Instrument Flight Rules is flown in or encounters Visual Meteorological Conditions it shall not cancel its IFR flight plan unless it is expected and intended that the flight will be continued for a reasonable period of time in uninterrupted Visual Meteorological Conditions.

11. Rule 39. Rules applicable to IFR flights within controlled airspace

- 11.1. IFR flights shall comply with the provisions of Rules 27 to 32 when operated in controlled airspace.
- 11.2. An IFR flight operating in cruising flight in controlled airspace shall be flown at a cruising level, or, if authorised to employ cruise climb techniques, between two levels or above a level, selected from:
- a) the table of cruising levels in Rule 4; or
 - b) a modified table of cruising levels when so prescribed in accordance with paragraph (3) of Rule 4 for flight above flight level 290, except that the correlation of levels to tracks prescribed therein shall not apply whenever otherwise indicated in air traffic control clearances or specified by the appropriate ATS authority in Aeronautical Information Publications.

12. Rule 40. Rules applicable to IFR flights outside controlled airspace

Cruising Levels

An IFR flight operating in level cruising flight outside of controlled airspace shall be flown at a cruising level appropriate to its track as specified in:

- a) the table of IFR cruising levels in Rule 4 except when otherwise authorised by the appropriate ATS authority for flight at or below 900 metres (3,000 ft) above mean sea level; or
- b) a modified table of cruising levels when so prescribed in accordance with Rule 4(3) for flights above flight level 290, except that the correlation of levels to tracks shall not apply when using cruise climb techniques for supersonic flight.

13. Rule 41. Communications

- 13.1. An IFR flight operating outside controlled airspace but within or into areas, or along routes, designated by the appropriate ATS authority in accordance with Rule 23 (2), (c) and (d), shall maintain an air-ground voice communication watch on the appropriate communication channel and establish two-way communication, as necessary, with the air traffic services unit providing flight information service.
- 13.2. An IFR flight operating outside controlled airspace shall comply with the provisions of Rule 28 (5) in respect of position reports.