



الهيئة العامة للطيران المدني
GENERAL CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

UAE AIRSPACE POLICY (ASP)

February 2015



Name of Instrument

This instrument is the UAE Airspace Policy (ASP) 2015.

Commencement

This issue of the ASP commences on February 2015 and remains in place until revised or replaced.

Definitions and Reference Documents

Terms used in the ASP are defined in the Glossary of Terms. Documents referenced in the ASP, and details on how to access them, are listed at the end of the ASP.

Objectives

The General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), hereafter known as the Authority, considers the safety of air services as the first priority in airspace management and that the Authority should respond quickly to emerging changes in risk levels for air transport operations. Airspace management should also seek to deliver acceptable levels of safety outcomes to all aviation participants.

The Authority will continue to reform the UAE's airspace and move towards closer alignment with the ICAO system and adoption of proven international best practice with the intent of contributing to the economic wellbeing of the UAE in collaboration with all stakeholders.

The objective of the ASP is to create an effective, efficient, safe, secure, accessible and flexible environment within which demands for access to National airspace do not put a constraint on reasonable growth in the aviation sector of the economy. This may be brought about by embracing technological advances which supports management of the future aircraft demands in the most efficient manner possible, including air traffic flow management processes which favour aircraft better equipped to comply with airspace requirements.

The Authority has also identified four specific airspace policy objectives in relation to the use of the UAE FIR which are outlined below:

- support for ICAO's Global Air Traffic Management (ATM) Operational Concept and use of ICAO airspace classifications;
- the adoption of the ICAO Aviation System Block Upgrade (ASBU) programme;
- enhanced ATM services for international aerodromes served by air services, as determined by the Authority; and
- effective cooperation between the Authority and all ATM stakeholders.



The objectives also include achieving the key attributes of the 2030 UAE Airspace and ATM System which include:

- Fair and equitable access to all airspace, airports and ATM services based on Best Capable – Best Served.
- UAE airspace considered as a “National Asset” with the implementation of Flexible Use Airspace for Civil and Military operations based on real-time needs.
- Seamless Air Navigation Service Provision throughout the UAE.
- PBN Route Structure throughout UAE.
- Flight Procedures tailored for optimum climb and descent to runways in use.
- Airport infrastructures that maximize throughput and minimize congestion.
- Balancing traffic demands and capacities in a collaborative manner.
- Interoperability of ATM systems within the UAE and with neighbouring FIRs.

Purpose

The ASP is made pursuant to Articles 4 and 20 of Federal Act 20 of 1991 (the UAE Civil Aviation Law) and Article 7 of Federal Law 4 of 1996 (the GCAA Law) in that the GCAA has the Authority to promulgate the general policy for civil aviation, supervise all matters relating to civil aviation and its development in the state and establish rules of the air and other regulations concerning use of the airspace. The ASP provides guidance to the Authority, as the airspace regulator, and to the ATM stakeholders on the management of airspace as a national resource.

The Air Navigation and Aerodromes (ANA) Department

The Authority will exercise its airspace authority on the advice of a determination from the ANA department. The Authority recognizes that the safety of air navigation is the most important consideration and the ANA must approach the development of its advice on airspace regulation on the same basis.



The legislation and regulations which govern airspace management require a broad range of activities to be undertaken by the Authority. While the ASP focuses on priorities and processes for a selection of those activities, all roles, functions and responsibilities under the Civil Aviation Law 20 of 1991 and the General Civil Aviation Law 1996 must be fulfilled by the Authority and the Policy does not alter the primacy of the relevant legislative provisions.

Airspace Management

The management of the UAE FIR:

- shall be in the best interests of the UAE;
- shall consider the current and future needs of the UAE aviation industry;
- shall adopt proven international best practice airspace systems adapted to benefit the UAE's aviation environment;
- shall take advantage of advances in technology wherever practicable;
- shall be integrated as much as possible with adjacent airspace, without compromising efficiency and development within the UAE FIR.

Airspace Classes Used in UAE FIR

Airspace management in the UAE is aligned with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) prescribed airspace classes and associated levels of service as set out in Annex 11 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (1944) (Chicago Convention).

Under the Civil Aviation Airspace Regulations the Authority is responsible for determining when and how these classifications are to be deployed in the UAE FIR. Any changes to airspace classes and corresponding information shall be published through the UAE AIP in a timely and accurate manner.

Pursuant to regulations made under Article 7 of the GCAA Law, the Authority is responsible for the classification and designation of all airspace within the UAE FIR. Not all classifications shown above are necessarily used within the UAE FIR.

The Authority has sole responsibility for the regulation of the design of all UAE-administered airspace, ATS routes and flight procedures.



Prohibited, Restricted, Danger Areas and Segregated Airspace

The UAE has adopted the ICAO designations described in Annex 15, Chapter 2, of the Chicago Convention for accommodating activities that may be incompatible with routine flying operations, i.e. Prohibited, Restricted and Danger Areas. These areas and the circumstances in which they can be declared are described in Civil Aviation Airspace Regulations. This is consistent with the relevant ICAO documentation. In addition, the Authority has created an airspace designation “Segregated Airspace” based on European ATM designations.

The declaration of these areas and the circumstances in which they can be declared are as follows:

- Prohibited Area – The Authority must not declare an area to be a Prohibited Area unless, in the opinion of the Authority, it is necessary for safety and security reasons to prohibit the flight of aircraft through the area.
- Restricted Area – The Authority must not declare an area to be a Restricted Area unless, in the opinion of The Authority, it is necessary for safety and security reasons or the protection of the environment to restrict the flight of aircraft through the area to aircraft flown in accordance with specified conditions.
- Danger Area – The Authority must not declare an area to be a Danger Area unless, in the opinion of The Authority, there exists within the area an activity that is a potential danger to aircraft flying through the area.
- Segregated Airspace – The Authority must not declare an area to be Segregated Airspace unless, in the opinion of the Authority there is a specific need for such an airspace, access to which is dictated by the classification of the Segregated Airspace.

Process for Changing the Classification of a Volume of Airspace

Changes to designated airspace within the UAE FIR shall be proposed by ATM stakeholders according to the requirements of Civil Aviation Airspace Regulations.

Support for ICAO’s Global Air Traffic Management Operational Concept

The undertaking of airspace management will reflect the Authority’s commitment to the ICAO Global ATM Operational Concept.

The ICAO Global ATM Operational Concept is the international vision for an integrated, harmonised and globally interoperable ATM system and includes a component on ‘airspace organization and management’.



Aerodromes

The Authority shall support the ATM stakeholders in ensuring that effective ATM infrastructure and systems are used throughout Navigable Airspace within the UAE FIR.

The Authority shall support the ATM stakeholders in ensuring that appropriate airspace arrangements are in place at all aerodromes regularly served by air services.

Cooperation with the UAE's ATM Stakeholders

The Authority shall support the ATM stakeholders in ensuring the continuing development of a seamless, harmonised National ATM system.

The Authority shall support the ATM stakeholders in ensuring that the needs of all airspace users are properly considered, the provision of ATM services is properly coordinated and the management of the UAE's airspace is both safe and efficient.

Consistent with the above is the development of a policy of a harmonised national civil and military air traffic management system, through which better coordination of national civil and military airspace requirements will be facilitated by encouraging close cooperation between civil and military ATM stakeholders.

UAE ATM Strategic Plan

The Authority shall carry out its responsibilities as the airspace regulator in accordance with Civil Aviation Law 20 of 1991, the GCAA Law 4 of 1996 and the Civil Aviation Regulations.

This legislative framework enables The Authority to examine and determine future UAE airspace requirements and has established that safety of air navigation is the most important consideration.

The UAE ATM Strategic Plan involves the adoption of a risk-based approach to determining the UAE's future airspace needs.

The implementation of the ATM Strategic Plan requires the identification of risks to aviation safety using both quantitative and qualitative analysis, and ultimately the safety judgment of the Authority as the airspace regulator.

The Authority shall adopt international best practice in airspace management. This includes adopting proven international systems that meet our airspace requirements. The UAE ATM



Strategic Plan recognises that international airspace systems (such as the European Single Sky concept) include a range of characteristics that should be considered, and implemented as appropriate.

ICAO standards and recommended practices (SARPs) also provide an important basis for airspace management. The airspace strategy requires any deviations from ICAO SARPs to be well justified, documented, and formally notified to ICAO as a difference.

The UAE ATM Strategic Plan requires transparency so that the ATM stakeholders have clear insight into the way in which airspace management decisions will be developed, taken and implemented including stakeholder consultation. The UAE ATM Strategic Plan does however recognise there will be times when urgent decisions are required to meet a safety imperative.

Glossary of Terms

AIP	Aeronautical Information Publication – Published by the GCAA, containing aeronautical information of a lasting character essential to air navigation.
Air Services	An air service performed by aircraft for the public transport of passengers, cargo or mail for remuneration or hire.
ASP	UAE Airspace Policy – Instrument that provides guidance on the management of UAE airspace.
Air Transport Operations	An operation involving an aircraft engaged in the transportation of passengers, cargo and mail for remuneration or hire offering service to the public on demand and not to a published schedule.
ANA	Air Navigation and Aerodromes Department – Operational unit within GCAA that regulates airspace, air traffic management, communications, navigation and surveillance.
ATC	Air Traffic Control – Service provided by ground-based controllers to maintain a safe distance between aircraft and obstacles, within a confined airspace and on the airport surface.
ATM	Air Traffic Management – Includes ATC, airspace management and air traffic flow management.
Chicago Convention	Convention on International Civil Aviation (1944)
Determination	A decision to change the class of a volume of airspace that is formalised as a legislative instrument.
GCAA	The United Arab Emirates General Civil Aviation Authority.
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization – United Nations agency which oversees international air navigation.
IFR	Instrument Flight Rules – A set of flight rules that assume the visibility conditions are such that instruments must be used to assist with flying.
SARPs	Standards and Recommended Practices (ICAO)
Segregated Airspace	defined as either: Temporary Segregated Area (TSA) A defined volume of airspace normally under the jurisdiction of one aviation authority and temporarily segregated, by common agreement, for the exclusive use by another aviation authority and through which other traffic will not be allowed to transit, or Temporary Reserved Area (TRA) A defined volume of airspace normally under the jurisdiction of one aviation authority and temporarily reserved, by common agreement, for the specific use by another aviation authority and through which other traffic may be allowed to transit, under ATC clearance.
VFR	Visual Flight Rules – A set of flight rules that assume visibility is good enough to fly with visual reference to the horizon.



Referenced Documents

This section provides information on the documents referred to in the ASP and information on how to access the documents.

Convention on International Civil Aviation

The UAE has ratified the Convention on International Aviation (1944) (Chicago Convention). The authorised text can be accessed in a number of ways:

- The Chicago Convention is incorporated in the UAE Civil Aviation Law and the GCAA Law.
- The Chicago Convention can be downloaded from the ICAO website – <http://www.icao.int/publications/Pages/doc7300.aspx>

Article 37 of the Chicago Convention empowers ICAO to adopt Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) in relation to a range of aviation safety issues and other matters concerned with the safety, regularity, and efficiency of air navigation as may from time to time appear appropriate. The SARPs are promulgated by ICAO in Annexes to the Chicago Convention. Article 38 requires contracting States that do not comply with the SARPs to notify a difference to ICAO. Articles 37 and 38 can be viewed at the links above.

Annexes to the Chicago Convention

An overview of the Annexes to the Chicago Convention is available at the ICAO website – <https://portal.icao.int/icao-net/Pages/Annex-en.aspx>

Copies of the Annexes to the Chicago Convention can be obtained from the ICAO website – <http://store1.icao.int/sectionBrowse.ch2?DocBureauID=7;>

Civil Aviation Law 20 of 1991

Available on the GCAA Website

http://www.gcaa.gov.ae/cms_data/Files/Federal%20Act%20no%2020%20for%201991-%20Civil%20Aviation%20Law%20Eng.pdf.

GCAA Law 4 of 1996

Available on the GCAA website.

http://www.gcaa.gov.ae/cms_data/Files/Federal%20Law%20No%204%20for%20the%20year%201996%20en.pdf.



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Civil Aviation Airspace Regulations

Civil Aviation Airspace Regulations are available on the GCAA Website.

<http://www.gcaa.gov.ae/en/epublication/pages/cars.aspx?CertID=CARs>.

Aeronautical Information Publication

The UAE AIP, and all related documents, is available by subscription from the Emirates ACC.

<http://www.gcaa.gov.ae/en/ais/pages/default.aspx>.