Aerodrome Safety

Roads, Vehicles & Equipment

16th April 2025

ASDRVE_OSI_010

Version 5.1

# Operational Safety Instruction

# ATC Radio Frequencies Control of Vehicles on the Manoeuvring Area

It is the responsibility of all employers to ensure that relevant OSIs are brought to the attention of their staff. However, individuals remain responsible for their own actions and those who are in any doubt should consult their Supervisor or Manager.

## 1. Introduction

**1.1** This Operational Safety Instruction (OSI) describes the radio frequencies used by Air Traffic Control (ATC) to inform and communicate with vehicle drivers operating on the manoeuvring area at Heathrow.

**1.2** Red bars have been added to the side of the document to draw the reader's attention to where changes have been made.

**1.3** This OSI should be read in conjunction with the reference documents as stipulated therein, if applicable. All current OSIs can be found via the link here or via the Quick-response (QR) code below.

**1.4** The older version of this OSI "ASDRVE_OSI_010, ATC Radio Frequencies Control of Vehicles on the Manoeuvring Area (Version 5.0)" is hereby cancelled.

## 2. Definitions

| Abbreviation | Description |
|---|---|
| **ATC** | **Air Traffic Control** |
| **CTCSS** | **Continuous Tone Coded Squelch System** |
| **GMC** | **Ground Movement Control** |
| **NATS** | **National Air Traffic Service** |
| **OSI** | **Operational Safety Instruction** |
| **UHF** | **Ultra High Frequency** |
| **VHF** | **Very High Frequency** |

For the purpose of this OSI, the term “manoeuvring area” refers to taxiways and runways.

## 3. Airfield Frequencies Overview

**3.1** NATS provides the ATC service at Heathrow. Control of vehicles on the manoeuvring area is exercised through the VHF radio frequencies listed below:-

i. **118.505** Mhz - Southern Runway (09R/27L)
ii. **118.705** Mhz - Northern Runway (09L/27R)
iii. **121.905** Mhz - GMC1
iv. **121.705** Mhz - GMC2
v. **121.855** Mhz - GMC3
vi. **124.480** Mhz - Standby frequency

**3.2** The above VHF frequencies are cross-coupled (linked) to the UHF used by the majority of radios in the vehicles on the airfield. These UHF frequencies are referred to by ATC using their Channel number:-

i. Channel 1 (GMC1) - linked to **121.905** Mhz
ii. Channel 7 (Northern Runway 09L/27R) – linked to **118.705** MHz
iii. Channel 9 (GMC2) - linked to **121.705** Mhz
iv. Channel 10 (GMC3) - linked to **121.855** Mhz
v. Channel 11 (Southern Runway 09R/27L) - linked to **118.505** Mhz

**3.3** The UHF frequencies (Channels) use CTCSS switching to reduce the level of interference on these channels. These tones are silent to the user but are essential for the operation of the radio.

**3.4** Airport companies should refer this OSI to their radio coordinator or service provider, who will advise them on the technical aspects of this instruction.

## 4. Operational - Runways

**4.1** **At all times**, ATC control of the promulgated runways is exercised by the Southern Runway (27L/09R) Controller on **118.505** Mhz and the Northern Runway (27R/09L) Controller on **118.705** Mhz.

**4.2** Aircraft and vehicles wishing to make a crossing of the Southern runway (09R/27L) should hold short of the runway and contact the Tower using **118.505** Mhz. Drivers who are unable to select the VHF air frequencies should hold short and call for crossing clearance on **Channel 11**.

**4.3** Vehicles wishing to make a crossing of the Northern runway (09L/27R) should hold short of the runway and contact the Tower using **118.705 Mhz.** Drivers who are unable to select the VHF air frequencies should hold short and call for crossing clearance on **Channel 7**.

**4.4** After the last scheduled movement, ATC control of the promulgated runway(s) will continue as per daytime operations using **118.705** Mhz / **Channel 7** for the Northern Runway and **118.505** Mhz / **Channel 11** for the Southern Runway. These frequencies may be operated by the same controller (band-boxed).

## 5. Operational - Taxiways

**5.1** ATC GMC is responsible for all aircraft and vehicular movements on the taxiway system. During the day, ATC GMC is split into three areas, each with their own frequency:-

GMC 1 VHF - **121.905** Mhz; UHF - Channel 1
GMC 2 VHF - **121.705** Mhz; UHF - Channel 9
GMC 3 VHF - **121.855** Mhz; UHF - Channel 10

**5.2** ATC GMC may be operated using a reduced number of frequencies. If this occurs during Westerly Operations – GMC 1 and GMC 3 will be band-boxed (linked) using **121.855** Mhz (Ch 10). During Easterly Operations – GMC 1 and GMC 2 will be band-boxed (linked) using **121.905** Mhz (Ch 1). Vehicles operating using UHF channels should ensure they continue to select the correct channel for their area of the airfield. VHF users may obtain the frequencies in use by contacting Airfield Operations on 0208 745 6459.

**5.3** After the last scheduled movement, ATC GMC control of the airfield is exercised using **118.505** Mhz and **Channel 11**.

## 6. Training

To drive on the manoeuvring area, a driver must hold a valid Airside Driving Permit. This will either be 'M' class or 'R' class, with only the latter providing access to runways. Issuance of a permit will require the holder to be fully conversant and competent in the use of the radio equipment, and selection of the frequency or channel to be used on the appropriate part of the airfield, see OSI "ASDRVE_OSI_006 Airside Driver Permit Requirements and Driver Training".

## 7. Other Frequencies

i. 121.600 Mhz – Heathrow Airport Fire and Rescue Service
ii. 121.500 Mhz – Emergency Frequency

## 8. Ground Movement Map

The Heathrow Ground Movement Map is available from the Heathrow website https://www.heathrow.com/company/team-heathrow/airside/useful-publications/airfield-maps

## 9. Enquiries

Any questions concerning this OSI should be addressed to Heathrow Airside Operations Team by email to airside_safety@heathrow.com.

Aerodrome Safety

# Document Data

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|---|---|---|
| **Document Name**<br>ATC Radio Frequencies Control of Vehicles on the Manoeuvring Area | **Document Reference Number**<br>ASDRVE_OSI_010 | **Issue Date**<br>15th November 2016 |
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| **Aerodrome Manual Reference**<br>E.8.1 | **Airside Standard Reference**<br>N/A | **Airside Plan Reference**<br>N/A |

# Document History

| Revision | Description of Change | Date |
|---|---|---|
| V1.0 | Transferred to new template | 30th June 2017 |
| V2.0 | Change of VHF frequencies for 8.33khz spacing | 20th August 2018 |
| V3.0 | Date change (NATS error) | 04/09/18 |
| V4.0 | Update/addition of band-box procedure | 08th May 2019 |
| V5.0 | Change to runway frequencies / addition of training requirements and new emergency frequencies | 12th November 2021 |
| V5.1 | General formatting update and amendment on standby frequency | 16th April 2025 |