



AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR 001/2026

SPECIALTY AIR COMBAT TRAINING IN CANADIAN AIRSPACE PURSUANT TO SECTION 5.1 OF THE AERONAUTICS ACT

Introduction

Specialty air combat training refers to air combat training conducted by civilian operators. This activity includes aggressive maneuvering of aircraft in close proximity to each other and requires intense focus by the pilots involved. It is not something that can therefore be conducted safely in shared airspace. In recognition of this, the following restrictions have been put in place regarding this activity, effective as of December 19, 2025.

Restrictions and prohibitions for safety or security purposes

5.1 The Minister or any person authorized by the Minister may by notice prohibit or restrict the operation of aircraft on or over any area or within any airspace, either absolutely or subject to any exceptions or conditions that the Minister or person may specify, if, in the opinion of the Minister or person, the prohibition or restriction is necessary for aviation safety or security or the protection of the public. R.S., 1985, c. 33 (1st Supp.), s. 1; 2004, c. 15, s. 8.

Definitions

Built Up Area for the purposes of this notice, means a population centre with a density of greater than 25 persons per square kilometer based on Statistics Canada's Aggregate Dissemination Areas available online.

Sparsely Settled Area, in this notice, means a geographically defined area within which the population density is dispersed at a density less than 25 persons per square kilometer based on Statistics Canada's Aggregate Dissemination Areas available online.

Remote Area means a geographically defined area within which the population density is dispersed at a density of less than 5 persons per square kilometer based on Statistics Canada's Aggregate Dissemination Areas available online.

Specialty Air Combat Training (SACT) Operations means any civil training, whose prime function is to provide training related to air-to-air and/or air-to-surface combat operations. This includes but is not limited to air combat maneuvers, evasive maneuvers, and simulated weapons delivery.

Tactical Navigation Training is a SACT activity that is carried out in Class G, F or E airspace (excluding Class E CTZ) which involves(s) one or multiple aircraft in close or tactical formation conducting navigation exercises using their own navigation, along pre-planned surveyed routes, not involving any interactions with simulated opponents, any simulated weapons profiles, tactical profiles, or defensive manoeuvres.

Close formation means a formation of 2 or more aircraft under the command of a flight leader and for which the wingmen fly with sole reference to the lead aircraft. This type of activity precludes any possibility for the wingmen to lookout for other aircraft and relies entirely on the flight lead to perform the "see and avoid" functions.

Tactical formation involves special maneuvering during SACT activities of more than 1 aircraft that are under the command of a flight leader, using a standardized set of signals and commands to direct the other aircraft in the formation. Tactical Formation requires the special attention of all pilots to coordinate and deconflict paths between members of the formation.

Activities related to defence, are activities administered by the Minister of National Defence.

Application

Pursuant to section 5.1 of the *Aeronautics Act* no person shall operate an aircraft to conduct Specialty Air Combat Training in Canadian airspace, unless conducted in accordance with the conditions below.

1. Except for the purpose of Tactical Navigation Training, all other Specialty Air Combat Training Operations shall be conducted in Class F – Restricted airspace.
2. All Tactical Navigation Training shall be conducted as follows:
 - a. All navigation routes will be outside of Class A, B, C or D airspace, or Class E Control Zones at all times.
 - b. Except for the purpose of take-off and landing, navigation routes shall not be within aerodrome control zones or within 10 nm of an aerodrome, whichever is greater, or within 10 nm from a built-up area.
 - c. Minimum altitude shall be 5,000 ft AGL in Sparsely Settled Areas and 1,000 ft AGL in Remote Areas, unless in Class F – Restricted airspace.
 - d. Due to the high closure speeds involved, the VFR weather limits for controlled airspace (CAR 602.114) shall apply; and
 - e. While onboard radar, ADS-B-IN and other sensors may be used for enhanced situational awareness, they shall not be relied upon to replace the “see and avoid” principle.

Note:

Further restrictions or regulations could be issued at a later time regarding the conduct of Specialty Air Combat Training Operations in Canada.

Further Information

For further information, please contact:

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