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HAZARDS IN USING DISUSED AND PARTIALLY USED AERODROMES

1 Mishaps continue to occur because some pilots appear not to realise the hazards they may meet when attempting to land at disused or partially used aerodromes.

2 Unannounced and unauthorised landings at disused aerodromes are fraught with two main types of hazard:

- (a) The paved surfaces and grass areas are not usually maintained in a suitable condition for use by aircraft. Once active flying ceases the surfaces soon become unsafe for use; and
- (b) ex-aerodromes may be sold or let out for some purpose unconnected with flying. Grass areas may be used for agriculture and the paved areas for storage, vehicle testing or for sporting activities.

Pilots must beware of the presence of people, animals, vehicles and equipment, especially of the difficulty to see fences and overhead wires on and near any disused aerodrome.

2.1 Disused runways are marked initially with a white diagonal cross at each end but weathering can obliterate these. At some inactive military aerodromes the cross is underlined by a white bar. This white bar means that the runway has been inspected within the last six months and was at that time considered suitable for emergency use. It does not guarantee that the runway is wholly safe for use.

3 Many old aerodromes are now only partially used. When such aerodromes are licensed the usable area is always clearly marked and approach and take-off paths will, to all intents and purposes, be unobstructed. Where significant obstacles do exist their presence will be notified in item AD 2.10 in the UK AIP. No such protection can be assumed at unlicensed aerodromes.

4 If you, as a pilot, intend to fly to a disused or partially used aerodrome you should always approach its owner or operator beforehand for permission to land, obtaining from him/her a full briefing on the location of the usable operating area, its obstacle environment, and possible hazards.

Note: Pilots are reminded of their obligations regarding low flying as detailed in Rule 5 of the Rules of the Air.

5 In an emergency you may be obliged to land at a disused or partially used aerodrome and you may have no idea of the conditions of the runway area or its obstacle environment. To guard against the hazards which can await you, a precautionary approach and low-level examination of the intended landing area should always be made when circumstances allow.

This Circular is issued for information, guidance and necessary action.