

# LOW FLYING: the law and the risks



*Reports of low flying have led to enforcement action against the pilots involved. This leaflet is a reminder of the rules of the air, the low flying hazards and the consequences of endangering people and property.*



## THE LAW

**Air Navigation (Overseas Territories) Order, Schedule 4, Section 3, Low Flying Rules**

**Section 22, Article 177 (below)**

A person must not recklessly or negligently cause or permit an aircraft to endanger any person or property.

- An aircraft must not be flown below such a height as would enable it to make an emergency landing without causing **danger to persons or property** on the surface in the event of an **engine failure**.
- An aircraft flying over a **congested area** of a city, town or settlement must not fly below such height as would permit the aircraft to **land clear** of the congested area in the event of an **engine failure**.

Except with the written permission of the Governor,

- an aircraft must not be flown closer than **500 feet** to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure.
- an aircraft flying over a **congested area** of a city, town or settlement must not fly below a height of **1,000 feet** above the highest fixed obstacle within a horizontal radius of 600 metres of the aircraft.
- an aircraft must not fly over an organised open-air assembly of **more than 1,000 persons** below whichever is the higher of the following heights:
  - (i) **1,000 feet**, or
  - (ii) such height as would permit the aircraft to land clear of the assembly in the event of an **engine failure**.



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## HAZARDS

- Reduced time, in the event of power loss there is less time to solve the problem, less glide distance, and reduced landing site options.
- Reduced visibility ahead of the aircraft makes it more difficult to see and avoid fast approaching obstacles.
- Reduced visibility, VMC can suddenly become IMC at low level. Even instrument rated pilots who have accidentally entered IMC at low level have lost control and collided with the terrain.
- Obstacles, at low level there is more chance of suddenly encountering birds, drones, kites, radio masts and terrain.
- Higher workload, due to the increased number of hazards and reduced time available to deal with anything.
- Turbulence, increased chance of strong thermal and mechanical turbulence that could lead to loss of control.

## CONSEQUENCES

- Loss of life in the aircraft or on the ground, loss of the aircraft
- Injury to persons in the aircraft or on the ground, damage to aircraft and/ or property
- Large fines or prison through endangering
- Loss of licence privileges through endangering

