

LOCAL AIRSPACE

Aim: To learn the basics of UK Airspace with a focus on local airspace used for gliding.

Whenever we are airborne, we are in some form of airspace. It will be either Uncontrolled Airspace or Controlled Airspace. As a pilot, we must learn what conditions and responsibilities we have when using each type of airspace.

Uncontrolled Airspace. This is airspace that is free of control by any Air Traffic Control (ATC) service. Pilots are free to fly where they like provided they comply with some basic rules of the air to ensure the safety of all who use the airspace. The rules are common sense and provide guidance on what weather conditions are suitable and acceptable for operating in this airspace. They specify the distance you must stay clear of cloud and the in-flight visibility you need to ensure you can see other aircraft (and terrain / objects) to manoeuvre clear of them if required. We call this operating in a “see and be seen” environment.

Controlled Airspace. This airspace is established to allow Air Traffic Control services to control aircraft, commonly called “traffic”, around airports and the airways between them. There are three main types of controlled airspace; Airways, Control Zones (CTRs) and Control Areas (CTAs). Control Zones are associated with aerodrome operations and are the only controlled airspace that extends from ground level to a specific upper limit (height). Control Areas extend from a specified lower limit to an upper limit and are further divided into Terminal Control Areas (TMAs); TMAs are established around one or more aerodromes and are designed to encompass the flight paths of controlled flights in to and out of the airfield. All our major airports have these. Airways are designed to encompass higher altitude airspace used by aircraft operating under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) as they fly to/from and between airports.

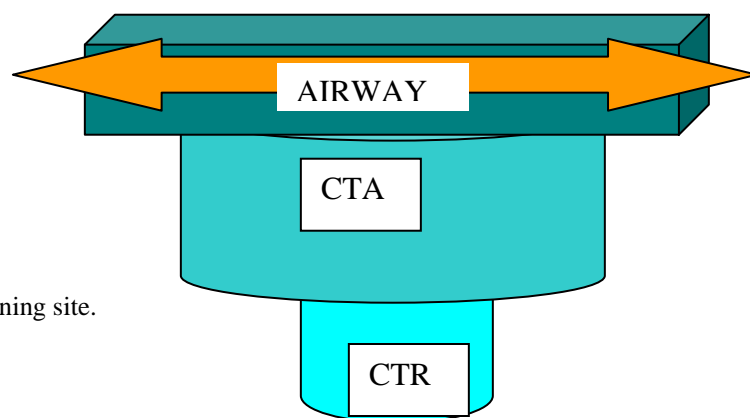
Most Airways and the larger Airports like Heathrow are protected by class A airspace. Gliders are not normally permitted to fly in class A airspace. Controlled airspace around local airports Bristol, Cardiff Lyneham, Brize Norton are all class D airspace, Gliders are permitted to fly in class D airspace provided the air traffic controller has cleared them to do so. The Bristol and Gloucester Gliding club also has arrangements/ with Bristol and Cardiff, by prior agreement we may fly in designated areas; these are activated by telephone. There are further classifications of Controlled Airspace that we can look at later in your training. You will need a radio to operate in most controlled airspace and of course, you will need to know how to use it correctly.

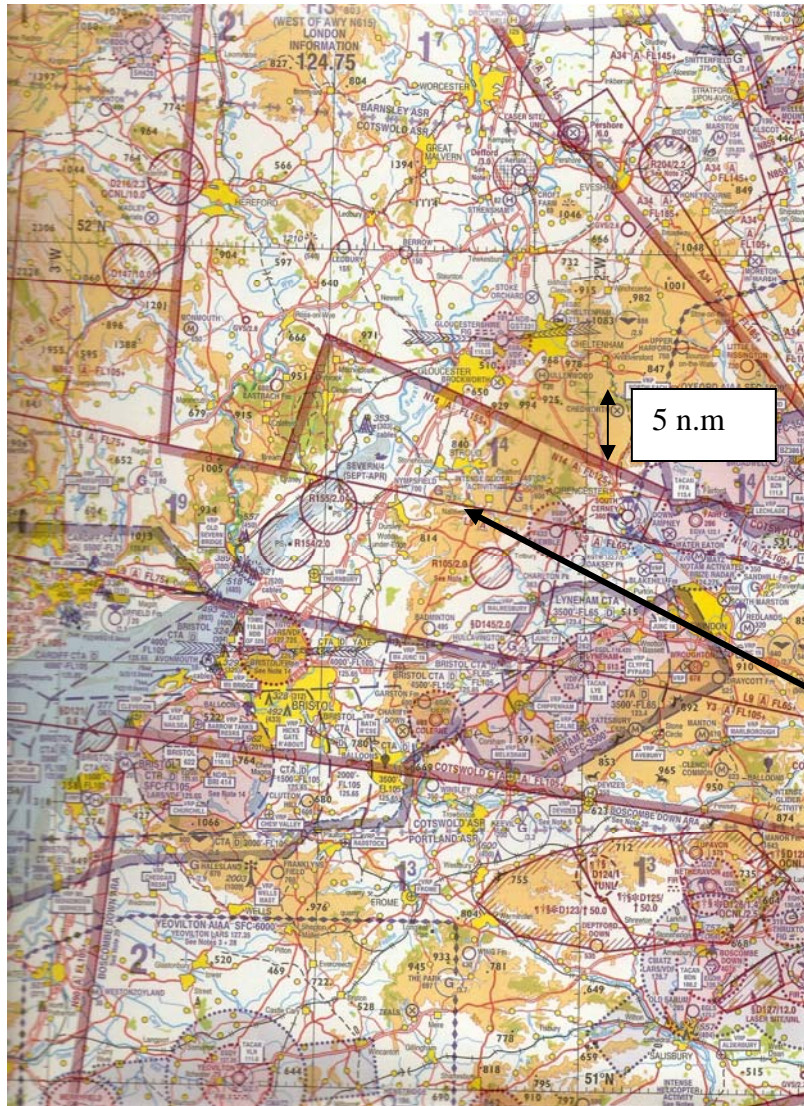
Many Airports have an Air Traffic Zone (ATZ), which must not be entered without permission; Staverton is an example of this. Small airfields like Nympsfield do not have an ATZ, we are marked on the aviation chart as an area of intense gliding activity with cables---aircraft are expected to approach our airfield with caution.

This shows the different types of airspace near an airport. The CTR goes from ground level up to say 3000 ft, then above that is the larger TMA.

Your Instructor will describe the types of airspace within 5 nautical miles of Nympsfield and tell you the rules for operating in them. As you gain experience, you will learn more about operating further a field and different types of airspace.

Need To Know: The airspace and rules for flying from your training site.





Example of a 1:500000 aviation chart.

These charts are updated twice per year.

If you intend to fly more than 5 nautical miles from your base you must carry up to date information about local airspace.

Nympsfield

Further Reading / Reference Material. Bronze and beyond Maps depicting local airspace