

International Virtual Aviation Organisation

Special Operations Regulations

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Special Operations Department

International Virtual Aviation Organisation

Amendments

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1.0	N/A	02/2021	SOD - 419127
1.1	Branding Updated	05/06	SOD - 419127
1.2	Letter of agreements changed to Special agreement	05/06	SOD - 419127

* All changes or additions will be highlighted by yellow.

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Introduction

Special Operations is an inherent part of IVAO; it is essential that it can be seamlessly integrated into civil air traffic whilst at the same time continuing to be able to perform its specialist tasks.

The aim and spirit of the Special Operations Department are to establish a global network standard for orderly and mature execution of Special Operations with extra emphasis, within reason, on the 'as real as it gets' principle.

1. General Regulations

1.1. Special Operations on IVAO are defined as aerial military operations, aerial work and other aviation flights, be that activities or operations that are performed under rules and procedures other than those that fully comply with ICAO Standard and Recommended Practices (SARPs) or other civil rules and procedures. Controlling military units and other units, other than civil air traffic services, responsible for flights mentioned above also fall under the regulation of Special Operations.

1.1.1. The definition in Regulation 1.1 includes, among others, the following (this list is NOT exhaustive):

a. aerial military operations:

- offensive operations
- counter-air missions
- formation flying
- low-level flying
- aerial refuelling
- airborne early warning and control aircraft
- communications relay aircraft
- carrier operations
- combat search and rescue
- training flights
- operations of unmanned (uninhabited) aircraft

c. Police and customs operations

b. aerial work or specialised operations:

- search and rescue operations
- aerial firefighting operations
- aeromedical evacuations
- construction work flights
- hoist or sling operations
- towing of other aircraft or objects
- oil spill works
- avalanche mining operations
- parachute operations and skydiving
- aerobatic flights (inc. displays)
- news media flights
- aerial photography (inc. air-air and air-ground)
- aerial observation, patrol or survey flights

- d. Any specialised or high-risk aerial operations**
 - animal herding, rescue or veterinary flights
 - releasing of objects or spraying from an aircraft
- e. Any other aviation flight (activities or operations) that deviate from ICAO SARPS or other civil rules and procedures (such as flights conducted below minimum heights, helicopter operations outside the height velocity diagram etc.)**
 - operations at offshore installations or ships
 - scientific research flights
 - cloud seeding flights
 - sensational flights (inc. zero gravity)
 - test or acceptance flights
 - calibration flights

- 1.2.** Special Operations Regulations and any other addition (permanent or temporary) are mandatory for compliance by all IVAO users.
- 1.3.** It is strictly prohibited to organise or perform any activity on the IVAO network that recreates either entirely or in part, present or past, any real-world warfare or significant real-world event that led to the loss of life. Furthermore, it is prohibited to conduct any activities or operations that may antagonise any user of IVAO or create controversy, irrespective of the reason.
- 1.4.** Military operations constitute a significant part of Special Operations; the execution of specific military operations in full compliance with these regulations shall not be interpreted by spectators as a simulation of aggression. Furthermore, real-world perspectives or events shall not influence a spectators' interpretation of military operations when they are being performed in compliance with these regulations.
- 1.5.** Special Operations activities or operations may only be carried out by users within the airspace of their Division as stated on their profile. Exemptions to this are:
- 1.5.1.** Approval has been obtained from a Division other than the members own and their VID is present on that Division's current Special Operations Order.
 - 1.5.2.** In a division that has declared that there is no requirement to get permission to fly SO within that Division. (as per Regulation 1.7)
 - 1.5.3.** Partaking in (unplanned) activities or operations where traceable permission (message, email) form the hosting Division has been obtained, and the activities are supervised by division staff form the duration of the activities.
 - 1.5.4.** Partaking in activities or operations as part of a Special Operations Event.
 - 1.5.5.** Partaking in activities or operations as part of a Special Operations Tour.

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- 1.5.6.** Partaking in activities or operations of a Special Operations Group which is registered to that Division and the user is an enrolled member.
- 1.5.7.** Partaking in activities or operations in a country where no established division exists (as per Regulation 1.6)
- 1.6.** It is prohibited to perform Special Operation activities or operations/missions of a military kind in a country without an active division. Non-military activities or operations can be performed so long as the aircraft type(s) being utilised are not capable of carrying weapons or munitions by design. Aircraft that can carry munitions can only fly in such countries to transit via the area and shall not conduct any missions and therefore not conducting a Special Operations flight.
- 1.7.** A Division may wish to forgo the requirement for users from other divisions to gain permission to fly SO in the Division. Therefore, allowing any users to conduct SO without prior permission and this shall be indicated within the divisions SO Order.
- 1.8.** Aircraft shall not be flown in segregated or restricted airspace that has been published in a [Division's Special Operations Orders](#) or on the IVAO NOTAM system except under the conditions of the airspace restrictions.
- 1.9.** It is prohibited for a user to perform interceptions, targeting or escorting of any traffic outside of the Division stated on their profile. Exceptions to this regulation can be made for users actively participating in a Special Operations Divisional/ International Event.
- 1.10.** A user may perform interceptions, targeting or escorting inside the Division stated on their profile, so long as all parties (the user(s) being intercepted and the user(s) intercepted) have a written agreement, via private message through IVAO clients, in place **PRIOR** to the interception commencing. This type of activity must also be conducted in one of the following two ways:
- 1.10.1.** Inside segregated airspace - Users may conduct interceptions, targeting or escorting without the requirement of an online air traffic controller inside any segregated airspace published under Item 1 of the Division's current approved Special Operations Order.
- 1.10.2.** Outside segregated airspace - Users may conduct interceptions, targeting or escorting outside of the published segregated airspace so long as there is an active air traffic controller connected who is responsible for the area(s) desired to be utilised **and** the user has the controller's written approval, via private message through IVAO clients, to operate within their airspace. This approval can be

withdrawn at any time, and the activity or operations must not be a nuisance to a fellow user(s) of that airspace.

- 1.11.** Formation flights shall be based on realism and be used for the purpose of formation flying only. A flight of multiple aircraft will only be classified as a formation if one of the following criteria below are met:
 - 1.11.1.** The purpose of the aircraft being in close proximity is to allow the aircraft to move from one place to another under one callsign.
 - 1.11.2.** The aircraft are of a similar aircraft type (e.g. fighters/ light aircraft) or the aircraft are from a similar organisation (e.g. air force/ historic flight).
- 1.12.** Formation flights shall not be seen as escorting unless explicitly stated. All parties involved shall agree to partake in any formation. Formation flying shall not be used as a means to intercept a user who does not wish to be intercepted.
- 1.13.** IVAO users can obtain approval to conduct Special Operations in a Division other than that stated on their profile by emailing the relevant Divisional Special Operations Staff or Division HQ. Once permission has been granted, and an updated Special Operations Order has been approved and published with the user's VID listed, they may perform Special Operations in that Division with no additional restrictions placed. This permission is not required by some divisions and will be stated in the Division's Special Operations Order if this is the case.

2. Use of Weapons

- 2.1.** The use of any form of weapon against any civilian object, structure, aircraft, or individual, whether this is explicit or implicit is strictly prohibited. It is also strictly prohibited for participants of Special Operations Events that involve the use of weapons to use them against any other traffic which is not partaking in that event.
- 2.2.** The use of any form of weapons are only authorised inside designated special areas that have been published on the IVAO data system and have been declared as a "Weapon Range" by the corresponding Divisional Special Operations Staff.
- 2.3.** A user may only use weapons when operating within the airspace of the Division as stated on their profile. Exemptions to this are as follows;
 - 2.3.1.** The user is participating in a Divisional or International Special Operations Event.

- 2.3.2.** The users have obtained permission from a Division other than their own to operate Special Operation flights in that Division, and the user's VID has been published in the Division's Special Operations Order.
- 2.3.3.** The users are in a division that has declared that permission is not required, and this is stated on the Division's Special Operations Order.
- 2.4.** The final authority on the use of weapons within a Division is the decision of the Divisional Special Operations Staff by establishing, or not establishing, a range.

3. Special Areas (Navigation Warnings)

- 3.1.** Special areas are pieces of airspace that shall be established to allow certain activities or operations to be conducted in a safe manner. These restrictions can be permanent or temporary and should, if possible, be based on a real-world equivalent and must be established as per Special Operations Instruction No. 4.
- 3.2.** Areas that allow the use of live ordnance or weapons shall be declared as a "Weapon Range".
- 3.3.** The following activities or operations listed below must make use of special areas designated for such activities when being conducted on the IVAO network:
- application of weapons (Regulation 3.2)
 - air combat training
 - launching and recovery of space vehicles
 - mass movements (mass aerial activity) of aircraft within a relatively small volume of airspace
 - interceptions (quick reaction alerts, targeting, escort, as well as training of these activities etc.) unless operating as per Regulation 1.10.2.
 - the dropping of objects or paratroopers
 - any other activities or operations that are likely to pose a hazard to civil aviation.
- 3.4.** Segregated airspace may be created or requested by the following parties:
- Special Operations HQ (SOD, SOAD or SOAx)
 - Division HQ (DIR, ADIR)
 - Division Special Operations Staff (SOC, SOAC, SOAx)
 - Event organising parties with permission from the host Division.
 - Special Operations Groups for training, sent via their Divisional Special Operations staff.
- 3.5.** A minimum of one Special Area shall be established by an active Division and must be stated in their Divisional Special Operations Order, but there are no minimum requirements to have a published Weapons Range.
- 3.6.** All special areas established in a Divisional Special Operations Order shall be activated by one of the following methods:

- 3.6.1.** Permanently Active – the special area is permanently active.
 - 3.6.2.** By date and time – the special area is active on specific dates and/or times that are stipulated in the Divisional Special Operations Order.
 - 3.6.3.** By NOTAM – the special area will be activated by a published NOTAM on the IVAO Data System stating the start and end date/ time of activation and closure.
 - 3.6.4.** By Air Traffic Controllers – the special area can be activated by an air traffic controller connecting and stating in their ATIS that a specific airspace within their area of responsibility is active. This method can be used in conjunction with any other method previously mentioned in Regulation 3.6.
- 3.7.** Temporary special areas can be established under the methods stated in 3.6.2, 3.6.3 or 3.6.4 without the need to be published in a Division Special Operations Order. In all instances, these temporary areas of airspace must be listed on the IVAO Data system (NOTAM's and/or special areas) and be active for a period of no more than 72 hours.

4. Special Operations Groups (SOGs)









- 4.1.** The status of a Special Operations Group, and its acronym “SOG”, are explicitly reserved for use by approved groups that have achieved and maintained the standards and requirements as set out in Special Operations Instruction No. 1 and are listed on the [Special Operations Group](#) page.
- 4.2.** Once a Special Operations Group has achieved this status, they receive access to extra privileges that not available to regular users, these are:
 - 4.2.1.** To request, via Division Special Operations Staff, the establishment of special areas for use by the Special Operations Group for training missions.
 - 4.2.2.** To organise their own Special Operations International Events.
- 4.3.** Unless specified in the Special Operations Groups’ own internal rules, a user may join any Special Operations Group and perform flights under their privileges irrespective of their Division stated on their profile.
- 4.4.** A Special Operations Group is tied to their founding user’s Division as of the time of filing an application to become a Special Operations Group. This country will be known as the Special Operations Group’s ‘country of registration’.
- 4.5.** Special Operations Groups may only operate in their country of registration unless they are:

- 4.5.1.** Partaking in an approved International Special Operations Event if registered (if required) and in Divisional Special Operations Events with prior approval from the Division.
- 4.5.2.** Partaking in a published Divisional Special Operations Tour or Special Operations HQ World Tour.
- 4.5.3.** Approved by another Division to conduct Special Operations in their country and the Special Operations Groups are listed under Item 7 of the division Special Operations order alongside any restrictions the Division may wish to put in place.
- 4.6.** Groups wishing to become an approved Special Operations Group must follow the procedure and meet the requirements as stated in Special Operations Instructions No. 1.
- 4.7.** Special Operations Groups are required to continuously meet the requirements as stated in Special Operations Instruction No. 1 and the Special Operations Department has the right to revoke the status of approved Special Operations Group at any time, without notice, if these requirements are not maintained.

5. Events

- 5.1.** International Special Operations Events may be organised by Special Operations HQ, Divisional Special Operations Staff and approved Special Operations Groups. The initial approval of Special Operations Events lies with the host division, and final approval is given by Special Operations HQ. International Special Operations Events are the only type of event where members can achieve points towards a Special Operations Award. International Special Operations Events are open for all IVAO users to participate in.
- 5.2.** Divisional Events are localised events that are targeted to users of the host division and therefore do not require Special Operations HQ approval. However, they are required to abide by the Special Operations Regulations and are not able to award Special Operations Points.
 - 5.2.1.** Any IVAO user may attend a Divisional Special Operations Event, but users who are not from the host Division shall obtain prior written approval from the Divisional Special Operations Staff.
- 5.3.** An International Special Operations Event may be run parallel, or in conjunction with an ordinary network event. However, participants of the International Special Operations Event will be unable to claim points or awards for participation in the ordinary network event; their participation is in one or the other.

- 5.4.** International Special Operations Events shall be created and conducted following Special Operations Instruction No. 5.
- 5.5.** Divisional Special Operations Events shall be created and conducted following Special Operations Instruction No. 6.
- 5.6.** Users who do not register on the Special Operations HQ website for an event that is using the mandatory registration process will be regarded as not participating by the organiser and Special Operations HQ and is therefore not eligible for Special Operations points.
- 5.7.** A Special Operations Event shall only take place in the Division where the event organiser (Division Staff or Special Operations Group founding user) is registered unless the event is co-organised with another Division(s).
- 5.8.** For participation in an International Special Operations event each participant, both Air Traffic Controllers or Pilots, will be awarded two (2) Special Operations points per event. If the event is held over multiple days, the participant will be awarded one (1) Special Operations point per day they have attended.
- 5.8.1.** Additional points may be awarded by Special Operations HQ where they feel the participation in multi-day events is more deserving than one (1) point per day. This clause is at the complete discretion of Special Operations HQ.
- 5.9.** Special Operations HQ wishes to acknowledge the contribution members make to the Department by attending and supporting events. Accumulated points contribute towards Special Operations Awards and the requirements to achieve each one is as follows:

PILOT POINTS			CONTROLLER POINTS		
	Jet Fighter 1	10 Points		Controller 1	10 Points
	Jet Fighter 2	40 Points		Controller 2	20 Points
	Jet Fighter 3	60 Points		Controller 3	30 Points
	Jet Fighter 4	100 Points		Controller 4	40 Points

6. Tours

- 6.1. There are two types of Special Operations Tours that can be established; Special Operations HQ World Tour and Division Special Operations Tour.
- 6.2. World Tours are created and managed by Special Operations HQ with tour legs moderated by World Tours HQ. Any flight flown for these tours shall be logged on the [World Tours website](#).
- 6.3. Any IVAO user may participate in any Special Operations Tour; both Division and World Tour.
- 6.4. Divisional Special Operations Tours are developed and managed by the Divisional Special Operations Staff of the respective Division following Special Operations Instruction No. 6a.
- 6.5. Divisional Special Operations Tours are required to be available in English. They can be hosted on either the Division's website or the [IVAO Tour System](#).
- 6.6. Divisional Special Operations Tours that do not contain activities or operations that are considered by these regulations as Special Operations will not be classed as a Special Operations Tour.
- 6.7. It is prohibited for a Divisional Special Operations Tour to partly or wholly operate in a country where no established division exists. Overflight of these countries is permitted, as long as the flights are conducted in conjunction with ICAO or local standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- 6.8. Divisional Special Operations Tours can contain parts of their tour in another Division's airspace other than their own, but these tours must be co-organised with the other Division.
- 6.9. It is strictly prohibited for Divisional Special Operations Tours to include legs that involve the use of weapons.

7. Divisional Special Operations Departments

- 7.1. A Divisional Special Operations Department is considered to be active if a minimum of a Special Operations Coordinator appointed and a Divisional Special Operations Order approved and published.
- 7.2. The following duties and responsibilities lie with Division HQ in relation to Special Operations;
 - 7.2.1. **MANDATORY** (even in the absence of a Special Operations Coordinator):

- 7.2.1.1.** Familiarisation and compliance with all Special Operations Regulations, Instructions and other official published documents.
- 7.2.1.2.** Development and publication of a Divisional Special Operations Order in compliance with Special Operations Instruction No. 3.
- 7.2.1.3.** Management of Special Operations Groups
- 7.2.1.4.** Processing requests from IVAO users, external from the Division, to person Special Operations Flights within the Division.
- 7.2.2.** With a Special Operations Coordinator appointed:
 - 7.2.2.1.** Development of a Divisional manual on controlling military units and other Special Operations units. This must be written in English, but can additionally be in the Division's local language(s).
 - 7.2.2.2.** Development and maintenance of a Special Operations section on the Division website and forum.
 - 7.2.2.3.** Development and publication of Special Operations related materials for the Divisional Special Operations community.
 - 7.2.2.4.** Undertaking active steps in promoting Special Operations at a Divisional level.
 - 7.2.2.5.** Engage with the Divisional Special Operations community.
 - 7.2.2.6.** Engage with members of the Special Operations community who are not yet registered with the network.
 - 7.2.2.7.** Develop and execute Divisional and International Special Operations Events.
- 7.2.3.** The duties stated in Regulation 7.2.2 are considered as generic. A detailed list of duties for Divisional Special Operations Staff to comply with can be found in Special Operations Instruction No. 2.

8. Documents

- 8.1.** Divisional Special Operations Orders are a Division's extension of the Special Operations regulations and following such orders have mandatory compliance when conducting Special Operations within the respective Division.
- 8.2.** Special Operations Orders shall be created in accordance with Special Operations Instruction No. 3.
- 8.3.** Special Agreements are documents that establish a formal agreement between multiple parties.
- 8.4.** Special Agreements are highly detailed documents that define a procedure or protocol between parties or can be used as exemptions from the Special Operations Regulations or other published documents. These agreements cannot be made with individual users or unregistered Special Operations Groups. These agreements shall be established in accordance with Special Operations Instruction No. 7.
- 8.5.** The current list of additional Special Operations documents are as follows:
- 8.5.1.** Special Operations Instructions:
- 8.5.1.1.** Special Operations Instruction No. 1 – Special Operations Groups
 - 8.5.1.2.** Special Operations Instruction No. 2 – Special Operations Departments
 - 8.5.1.3.** Special Operations Instruction No. 3 – Special Operations Order
 - 8.5.1.3.1.** Annex A – Divisional Special Operations Order (Example)
 - 8.5.1.4.** Special Operations Instruction No. 4 – Airspace restrictions and reservations
 - 8.5.1.5.** Special Operations Instruction No. 5 – International Special Operations Events
 - 8.5.1.6.** Special Operations Instruction No. 6a – Divisional Special Operations Tours
 - 8.5.1.7.** Special Operations Instruction No. 6b – Divisional Special Operations Events
 - 8.5.1.8.** Special Operations Instruction No. 7 – Special Agreements