

AIRSPACE AROUND PORTMOAK FOR GLIDER PILOTS

This affects YOU

We are, by the standards of many UK clubs, blessed with relatively unrestrictive airspace. However it is also complex in that different limits apply at different times and in different circumstances. What's written here is an attempt to describe it from a glider pilots perspective – it is not the law and may not be definitive – the UK Air Pilot is the where you will find the authoritative version (among a very great deal else...). This is written on and reflects the situation as we understand it as of mid March 2012 so beware of changes that may occur after this date. It also goes without saying that **any** airspace may be temporarily changed by NOTAM – so always check before you fly – there is now the facility to check these on the clubhouse computer. **Text in red is applicable to weekend flights only.**

“Local” Airspace Factors

1. **Directly above the airfield is the weekend only airway N864.**
2. **Immediately to the east of the airfield is the Glenrothes parachute drop zone active from 17:00 (local) on Friday and all weekend.**
3. Approximately 4nm South of the airfield lies the **Scottish TMA and the Edinburgh CTR.**
4. Approximately 6nm West of the airfield lies the Northern section of the **Scottish TMA.**
5. Approximately 7nm Northwest of the airfield lies airway **P600.**
6. There are **parachute drop zones** at Glenrothes (a mere 4nm E), Strathallan (c.16nm NW) and Errol (14nm NNE).
7. There are **active airfields** at Glenrothes, Perth (Scone), Dundee and Leuchars.
8. At the south edge of the Aberdeen TMA, the new airway **P18** routes offshore to Newcastle. This airway is effective from 05:30 to 09:00 (local) on weekdays and from 17:00 Friday to 09:00 (local) on Monday. (ie. all weekend)
9. **All** airspace above FL195 is now class C and gliders are excluded unless operating under the conditions of a special agreement.
10. **Special Agreements.** There are four arrangements which permit us to enter specific areas of controlled airspace by using specific procedures.

Taking these in more detail:-

1. N864
This exists **every** Saturday and Sunday regardless of anything else. The airway is **directly overhead our airfield** and Bishop Hill. **Over the airfield it starts at FL65.** If you are overhead or West of St Serf's island in L Leven you are clear to the West of the airway. If you fly N along Bishop the base rises from FL65 to FL85 as you reach the bowl above Kinnesswood village. **From there on (the gully, West Lomond itself and all of the North Face) you remain under that FL85 base. You need to be fully 1 mile West of the trig point on W Lomond summit before you are clear West of the airway.** This is an area where good wave often gets really going – usually in combination with strong head winds (low ground speeds) – so pilots need to be on their toes to avoid being carried upwards or backwards into the airway. Unless you have read, signed and activated the airway crossing procedure **STAY CLEAR OF THIS AIRSPACE UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES AT WEEKENDS.**

2. Glenrothes Parachute Drop Zone

At present this drop zone is notified up to 6000ft QNH. There are plans to increase the upper limit into N864 if satisfactory operating arrangements can be negotiated. **Keep an eye on the NOTAM's for potential changes.**

3. Scottish TMA and the Edinburgh CTR

At lower levels the Edinburgh Zone consists of a 20nm diameter circle centred on Edinburgh airport, class D from surface to 6000ft, surrounded by an angular box of Scottish TMA which is a mixture of class D and class E airspace below 6000ft. Above 6000ft the entire area is class D.

Gliders are currently permitted to fly in class E airspace so long as they maintain VMC. Holders of RT licences may request permission to enter class D airspace from the appropriate air traffic controller.

There is a letter of agreement giving gliders an improved chance of negotiating a clearance through the class D airspace to the west of the Edinburgh zone.

4. Northern Section of Scottish TMA

This airspace is class E from 4000ft up to 6000ft and class D above 6000ft. **Part of this airspace (together with a section of the Scottish TMA) may be opened to allow gliding at weekends - see later section on agreements.**

5. P600 Airway

This airway has a range of different base heights, from FL55 at either end through FL85 to FL105 in the central section.

From Portmoak a good visual reference for the SE edge of P600 is a line joining the Southern end of Glenfarg reservoir with the point at which the Earn flows into the Tay. The area of P600 covering the E end of the Ochils, Gleneagles and Strathallan has a base at FL55.

If you proceed on a NW course then a crossing North and East of Dunning has a base of FL85. Further N and E still a crossing N and East of Scone airfield (not Perth itself - that's still FL85) has a base at FL105. Further N again and the bases slant down again as the airway routes commercial aircraft into Aberdeen. **The southernmost sections of P600 may be opened to allow gliding at weekends – see later section on agreements.**

If you are flying during weekdays then unless you have read, signed and activated the airway crossing procedure **STAY CLEAR OF THIS AIRSPACE UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.** **If you are flying on a Saturday or Sunday you may be able to enter some of this airspace if and only if it has been opened per the agreement – see below.**

6. Parachute drop Zones

Unless you have positive information that any drop zone is inactive you must remain outside a circle of 1.5nm radius up to FL150 (6000ft QNH for Glenrothes) centred on each of the notified parachute sites. If you are within 3nm of either Strathallan or Errol drop zones, they would appreciate a call on 129.9MHz. You do NOT need an RT licence to call on 129.9MHz. (If they do not reply, this does NOT mean that the zone is inactive). Glenrothes frequency is 130.45MHz. They will be expecting gliding activity up to the edge of their drop zone.

7. Active Airfields

The ATZ's at the local airfields are active to 2000ft above surface; a simple rule of thumb is 2100ft above Portmoak. The zone at Leuchars is 2.5nm radius, whilst Perth, Dundee and Glenrothes are only 2nm. Pilots should be aware the Auchmuir Bridge is already some distance inside the Glenrothes ATZ.

8. Airway P18

This airway became effective on 17/2/05. The main impact on gliding is to lower the airway base to 4500ft over the Todhead lighthouse turnpoint. Fordoun (FOD) has been created as a good alternative.

Letters of Agreement

1. The most important agreement allows us to request the opening of **part** of P600 and **part** of the northern section of the Scottish TMA for gliding at weekends.

If flying at the weekend on a wave day, find out if P600 is OPEN before launching by looking at the flip board outside the clubroom.

If the airway is not open, then stay clear as above. If the airway is open, you may climb up to **FL190** in the marked areas, but must under no circumstances go within a **2nm** radius of Strathallan (this is a specific condition of the opening procedure). The area is identified by a line connecting Stirling, Doune and Callander to the Southwest, and ends at Scone Airfield to the Northwest.

If conditions improve and you require the airway to be opened, call the launch point on the radio and await their relayed clearance before entering. Note that this call should be made on 130.1MHz, as 129.975MHz is only licensed for use within 10Nm of site and below 3000ft.

If receiving this call, follow the procedure on the notice board in Irene's office. Once the airway is open, reset the sign outside the office and broadcast to all traffic on both 129.975 and 130.1MHz.

2. A second agreement allows us to request access to specific areas above FL195 at weekends – the waveboxes. This procedure requires two hours advance notification.

Note that the Portmoak wave box may only be opened in conjunction with the weekend delegation of P600.

If flying at the weekend on a wave day, find out if any of the wave boxes are OPEN before launching.

If the wave boxes are not open, then you must stay below FL195 at all times. If any of the boxes are open, you may climb up to FL240 in the appropriate areas, but must monitor the radio on 130.1MHz throughout, in case there is a need to vacate gliders from the area in case of an aerial emergency (this is a specific condition of the opening procedure).

The wave boxes cannot be clearly identified by visual features and it is an express condition of the LOA that you must navigate using a GPS with a moving map marked with the appropriate airspace.

If conditions improve and you require any of the waveboxes to be opened, call the launch point on the radio and await their relayed clearance before entering. Note that this call should be made on 130.1MHz, as 129.975MHz is only licensed for use within 10Nm of site and below 3000ft. You are extremely unlikely to gain access to any box except the Portmoak box at short notice.

If receiving this call, follow the procedure on the notice board in Irene's office. Once the airway is open, reset the sign outside the office and broadcast to all traffic on both 129.975 and 130.1MHz.

The LOA also permits access to certain areas above FL240. If you wish to implement this procedure, you will need to study the LOA and do the preparation yourself.

3. A third agreement allows gliders to cross P600 or N864 via predefined corridors. These corridors are shown on the sketch, but the procedure needs to be studied in detail prior to use. It applies only to those who have read, signed and telephone activated the procedure before launching. DO NOT invoke the procedure unless you know what you are doing.

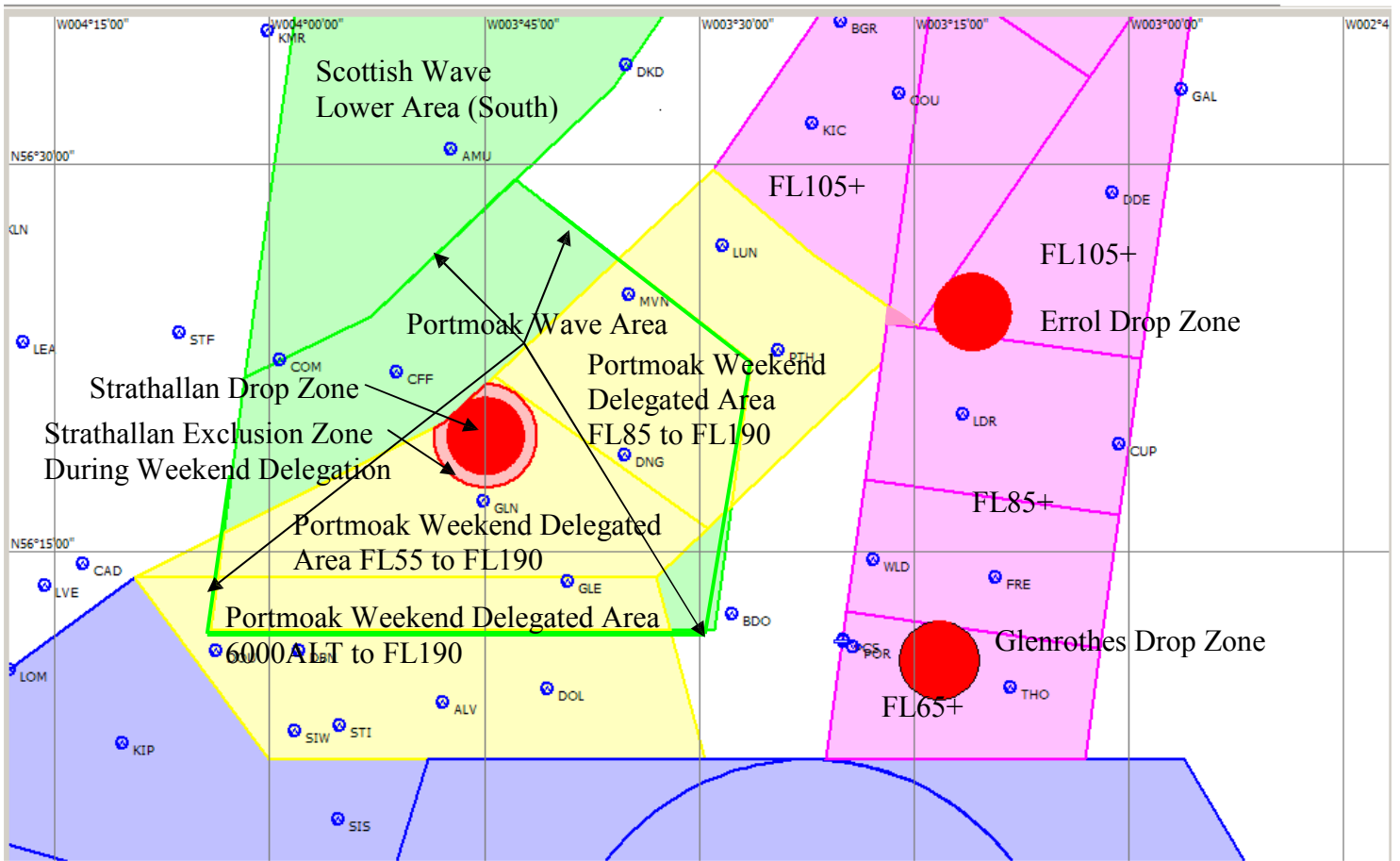
4. A fourth agreement allows gliders to penetrate the class D airspace to the west of the Edinburgh control zone at up to 3500ft. Once again, the procedure is complex and should not be attempted without first studying the procedure and then making prior arrangements by telephone.

Summary


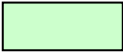


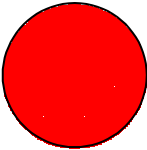

Our airspace is relatively unrestricted, but fairly complex. Making sure that all pilots understand and observe the rules is essential if we are to at least maintain our present level of freedom.

Portmoak Local Airspace

See accompanying notes and letters of agreement for full details



Legend

-  Portmoak Weekend Delegation Area (includes P600 crossing areas A & B)
-  Wave Boxes
-  Airway Areas only accessible under crossing LOA
-  Parachute Drop Zones
-  Strathallan Exclusion Zone During P600 Delegation
-  Scottish TMA, Edinburgh & Glasgow CTRs