

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

OPERATIONAL RATIONALE

DIRECTORATE OF HER MAJESTY'S COASTGUARD

MCA PATROL AIRCRAFT TASKING POLICY FOR MIGRANT SURVEILLANCE PATROLS

(HMCG OPERATION EOS)

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- The approved master copy of this document, with appropriate signatures, will be found within the relevant registered file for the Programme.

Revision History

- Date of this revision: [DATE \@ "dd.MM.yyyy"]

Revision Date	Summary of Changes
08/06/2020	Clarification that MCA tasking will occur regardless of other agencies' concurrent surveillance efforts

Approvals

Name	Title	Signature

Distribution

Name	Title

Overview:

HM Coastguard have the ability to task the MCA fixed-wing Patrol Aircraft to conduct proactive surveillance patrols with the aim of identifying suspected migrant craft (which the MCA defines as vessels in potential distress) and informing HMCG Operations Centres of their location so that appropriate SAR assets, both declared and additional, can be tasked to recover these vessels to a defined place of safety.

Following strategic discussions, it has been agreed that the funding for specific Search and Rescue (SAR) activity will now be through the MCA directly, as such missions are considered to be in support of SAR.

Proactive surveillance patrols will be undertaken by MCA fixed-wing Patrol Aircraft regardless of, and in addition to, other concurrent surveillance efforts (such as BF Tekever Drone activity).

Criteria:

These flights, which are proactive in their nature, can only be requested when the following criteria are met:

- Operation Deveran 48 Hour weather assessment received by the HMCG NMIC Liaison Officers and states that migrant crossings during a defined period of time (that is no greater than 12 hours) are deemed as likely to occur, irrespective of weather.

OR

- As a replacement asset when the Tekever Drone is unable to fly due to technical issues or contracted rest days, and analysis from either the BF weather assessment or the Met Office National Security Advice Group states the likelihood of migrant crossings is assessed as HIGHLY LIKELY (Red day).

Concurrent surveillance efforts undertaken by other agencies (such as Tekever Drone activity) will not impact on the decision to task MCA aircraft, and therefore, the MCA fixed wing aircraft may fulfil surveillance requirements either as a sole patrolling air asset, or as part of a joint or multi-agency surveillance operation.

Tasking Process:

1. Criteria for the proactive tasking of the MCA Patrol Aircraft is met and tasking is deemed necessary.
2. The NMIC Liaison Officer will then complete the Op EOS tasking request form and submit it to the ARCC using the tasking type: accident prevention and surveillance, including any tasking refinement in response to received intelligence.

3. ARCC will liaise with 2Excel, as per existing processes and report back to the HMCG NMIC Liaison Officer to confirm if tasking is achievable.
4. The NMIC Liaison Officer informs the Duty Maritime Controllers and relevant Team Leader of when and where the fixed wing aircraft will patrol.
5. MCA Patrol Aircraft on task and under the direction of the Dover CGOC.
6. MCA Patrol Aircraft to provide in flight imagery to Dover CGOC and post flight report to the HMCG NMIC Liaison Officer.
7. HMCG NMIC Liaison Officer to distribute post flight report to internal and external stakeholders as deemed appropriate.

What has changed:

- Up until this point it has been UK Border Force who have requested the tasking of the MCA Patrol Aircraft. Following high level discussions between the MCA and the JMOCC, it has been agreed that as these patrols are in support of SAR, and in meeting the above criteria, the tasking will be funded by the MCA.
- In light of this, HMCG will now take the lead on the tasking of the MCA Patrol Aircraft for proactive patrols to aid early identification of suspected migrant craft in the English Channel against the criteria set by the Director HM Coastguard.
- The Operation name specific to MCA tasking will be Op EOS. Any other requests for tasking of the aircraft outside of the above criteria can still be undertaken by any external stakeholder utilising their own operation name (i.e Op DEVERAN – Border Force).

What has not changed:

- The law enforcement intelligence will still come from UK Border Force and the National Crime Agency.
- Meteorological Analysis will still be received from the Met Office National Security Advice Group and UK Border Force.
- As with any other tasking, the aircraft can still be re-tasked by the ARCC to another higher priority incident in accordance with the ASV prioritisation policy.

Review Policy:

This policy will remain under continual review and it is within the authority of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to amend at any time. Any amendments to the process will be immediately informed to the appropriate stakeholders.