



## General Aviation and Wind Turbines

Government policy encourages developers to erect wind turbines throughout the UK; this is part of a wide plan to provide alternative sources of electricity. It is not AOPA's task to become involved in the pros and cons of this, but here we offer some guidance on the safety aspects in relation to general aviation:-

### *A. Height:*

1. Wind Turbines vary considerably in height but, in particular, the taller examples can be a hazard to aircraft letting down to an aerodrome circuit in conditions of low cloud, poor visibility, failing light or, at the other end of the weather scale, when flying towards a low, bright sun.
2. To be effective, turbines need to be erected in exposed areas and/or on high ground; in the latter case, when near an active aerodrome, this can create an added safety hazard to a problem that may exist even on level ground.
3. In addition to the physical hazard, there can be a psychological effect when a tall object under an aeroplane can appear closer than it is; this is especially disconcerting (certainly for an inexperienced or student pilot) when, for example, this disappears under a low wing.
4. A turbine can be an added problem if it lies under, or within about 20° of a climb-out or approach path from/to a runway; or if it is on a critical phase of a circuit pattern, e.g. close to a base leg where an aeroplane descends prior to the final turn. Here allowance should be made for pilots, especially students under training, to make errors as part of the learning process.

### *B. Available Guidance*

1. In the overall interest of supporting UK GA, AOPA provides free first-aid help to any owners/operators of flying sites faced with threats of wind turbines that might be hazardous to flight safety.
2. The Safety Regulation Group of the Civil Aviation Authority is prepared (quote) 'to provide a statement confirming that the erection of wind turbines in specific locations would/may affect safe operations at a specific aerodrome'. The CAA will discuss matters with any LPA that has doubts or queries. Requests should be made to the Flight Operations Inspectorate (General Aviation) at Aviation House, Gatwick Airport South, West Sussex RH6 0YR.
3. Many people think that only licensed aerodromes can be safeguarded. This is not so. CAP 428 'Safety Standards at Unlicensed Aerodromes' advises operators of all flying sites to lodge safeguarding maps with the local planning authority. AOPA is able to put applicants in touch with professional guidance.



4. CAP 764 'CAA Policy and Guidelines on Wind Turbines' is a very useful document. Sections of specific relevance to GA are:-

Chapter 1	1	Responsibilities
	2	Safeguarding
Chapter 2	7	Cumulative effects
	8	Turbulence
	10	Turbines away from aerodromes
Chapter 3	1	Notification to CAA <u>before</u> application for planning permission Safe distances from aerodrome relating to runway length(s) Parachute dropping, glider launching etc within 3km of proposed wind turbine(s)
	2	Lighting
	5	Depiction on charts
Chapter 5	1	Pre-planning consultation
	2	Formal planning
Appendix 3		Information flow re Civil Aviation Authority/Directorate of Airspace Policy

Clearly anyone involved or likely to be involved with wind turbines in relation to a flying site is strongly advised to obtain a copy of CAP 764. It can be purchased in printed form from The Stationery Office, PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN (0870 600 5522) or electronically at [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop). Details of amendments are available free of charge in electronic format at [www.caa.uk/publications](http://www.caa.uk/publications).

5. Free first-aid help from AOPA is available by contacting the Association at 50a Cambridge Street, London SW1V 4QQ or by email to [david@aopa.co.uk](mailto:david@aopa.co.uk). Sufficient detail (e.g. positions of proposed turbines in relation to the flying site, names/addresses of contacts, any problems specific to the case) should be provided to enable the case to be taken up with the appropriate people. Early action, though, is essential.

As with any other association, AOPA relies on membership income to be able to continue its overall support for GA, so anyone who seeks help beyond the initial stage is asked to join. The membership department can be contacted on 0207 834 5631, by post or at [info@aopa.co.uk](mailto:info@aopa.co.uk). However, first-aid guidance should be sought at the earliest opportunity and we will be pleased to advise anyone who has a wind turbine threat on the horizon.

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