



Draft Wicklow County Development Plan 2021 -2027

Department of Defence Submission – July 2021

Introduction

The Minister for Defence is responsible for the regulation of military aviation. The Irish Aviation Authority is responsible for the safety regulation of civil aviation including aerodromes but does not have remit for military aerodromes, installations or training areas. Safeguarding at Coolmoney Camp and the Glen of Imaal is intended to protect current and future aircraft operations and take account of the security requirements associated with some of those operations. The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) is an agency of the United Nations. ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices with respect to safeguarding are applied as part of Department of Defence safeguarding.

1. Glen of Imaal Training Area.

Military lands in the Glen of Imaal area are the Irish Defence Forces main training and largest live fire range areas. The training area has been in continuous use for over a century. The facility consists of the training lands in the Glen of Imaal including the Air Firing Range and also Coolmoney Camp at Knockanarrigan. The training area is constantly in use for Defence Forces troop exercises such as overseas readiness, casualty evacuation (casevac), and air firing involving both Army and Air Corps assets. For these reasons access to the Glen of Imaal by Air Corps low level aircraft is of vital importance to the Irish Defence Forces.

2. **Danger Area 5 (EI-D5)** is an area of airspace surrounding the Glen of Imaal for use by the Irish Defence Forces and is outlined in Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) Ireland. The lateral limits of the EI-D5 are shown in figure 1. The vertical limits of this airspace is from the surface to a maximum of 40,000 feet. EI-D5 is activated frequently for ground firing, aircraft conducting live firing and also for flying Defence Forces drones.

As a rule, Irish Air Corps flight within this airspace will not comply with the rules of the air. Hazards will exist to the safety of objects and/or persons inside the Danger Areas.

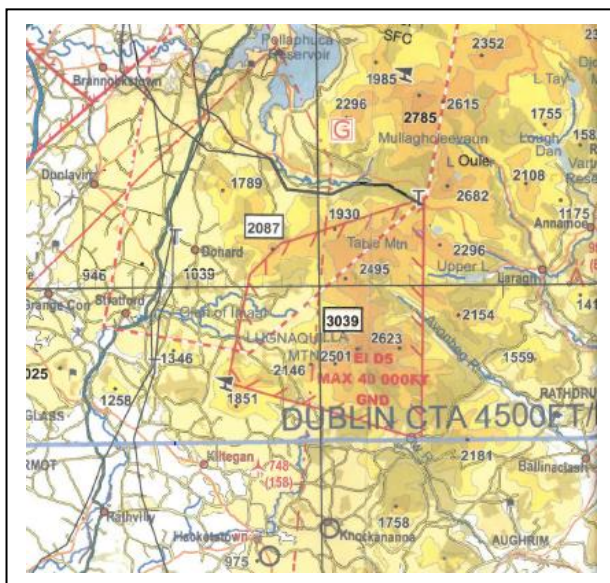


Figure 1.

3. **Coolmoney Camp** at Knockanarrigan is the primary location used to accommodate, administer, equip and brief all troops prior to entering the Glen of Imaal range area. The area surrounding Coolmoney Camp is routinely used for preparation and rehearsal training including the use of helicopters to practice troop drills. The lands surrounding the camp are seen as a safe area removed from the live range are for troops to rehearse all helicopter drills prior to entering the live range are to use live ammunition.

It is the position of the Department of Defence that all proposed tall structures within 5NM of military installations be assessed as to any impact on military flight operations. The rationale of a 5NM assessment area is to protect airspace for instrument arrival and departure procedures planned for the near future.

4. Separate to any training requirements, the necessity for operational (non-training) aircraft to have freedom of movement in the Glen of Imaal area cannot be understated. This would include taskings such as a 'live' casualty evacuation in the event of an accident in the firing range area. Figure 2 shows routine off airfield landing by an Air Corps AW139 helicopter.



Figure 2. Off airfield landing at Cemetery Hill, Glen of Imaal range area.

- a. Defence Forces training including the use of live munitions takes place both day and night and in all types of weather to simulate real operations primarily focused on overseas deployment.
- b. The fundamental reason for a helicopter casualty evacuation is the rapid transport of a patient to a major hospital for immediate care. An Air Corps/Coast Guard/HEMS helicopter air ambulance will normally have a doctor or at least paramedic on board for patient treatment during transfer. The aim is generally 1 hour from injury to hospital table to ensure best chance of a good outcome.
- c. The Glen of Imaal valley has a number of range areas where training takes place using live ammunition, explosives and other live ordnance types. The point of a danger area is the facilitation of dangerous activity. This training is dangerous in nature to prepare troops for overseas deployment to foreign hostile and dangerous locations. An essential part of Ireland's United Nations commitment is the preparation of our troops through 'Mission Readiness Exercises' (MRE) which are conducted regularly in the Glen of Imaal training area.
- d. Exercises using live ordnance and munitions are carried out every week in the Glen of Imaal training area and carry an obvious risk to Defence Forces personnel involved. This type of training is pre booked to meet deployment timelines and takes place at the booked time regardless of weather conditions.. As part of any risk assessment, the option for a helicopter casualty evacuation



in the event of serious injury to personnel is paramount. Any obstacles to the option of an immediate airborne casualty evacuation to an appropriate hospital will be measured by life saved or lost.

5. The Purpose of Safeguarding Coolmoney Camp and the Glen of Imaal.

The purpose of safeguarding is to ensure the viability of the Glen of Imaal and Coolmoney Camp as a site for air operations. Aerodrome safeguarding must protect both current and future uses considering the longest possible view both in terms of future use and developments in air navigation technology. In this regard, the Department of Defence safeguards EI-D5 as a live firing range and Coolmoney Camp for use as a site compatible with air operations including for implementation of instrument arrival and departure procedures.

- a. If development were to encroach upon the Glen of Imaal and Coolmoney Camp, its viability as a location for air operations would be lost.

6. Restricted Development within 5NM of Coolmoney Camp and the Glen of Imaal area. The main focus of this document is the control of development in the following areas:

- a. Within 5NM of Coolmoney Camp.
- b. Within the Glen of Imaal and the lateral limits of the EI-D5.

All proposed development within the Glen of Imaal should be assessed for any impacts on the use of Coolmoney Camp and EI-D5 by the Irish Defence Forces for flight operations.

- a. The development of wind turbines or other tall structures within the EI-D5 should not be allowed.
- b. Development in general should be restricted so that increased population density or movement within the EI-D5 is avoided.

End