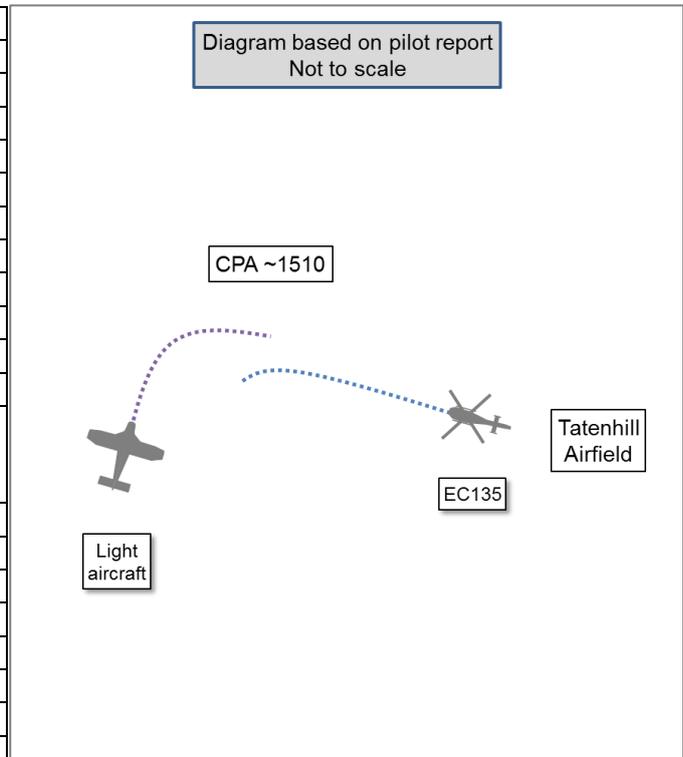


AIRPROX REPORT No 2015120

Date: 30 Jul 2015 Time: 1510Z Position: 5249N 00153W Location: ~ 5nm WNW Tatenhill

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	EC135	Light Aircraft
Operator	HEMS	Unknown
Airspace	London FIR	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	
Service	Basic	
Provider	Birmingham	
Altitude/FL	NK	
Transponder	A, C, S	A, C
Reported		
Colours	Red/yellow	
Lighting	Strobe, nav, landing/search lights	
Conditions	VMC	
Visibility	>10km	
Altitude/FL	1200ft	
Altimeter	QNH (1019hPa)	
Heading	290°	
Speed	125kt	
ACAS/TAS	TCAS I	
Alert	Choose an item.	
Separation		
Reported	50ft V/100m H	
Recorded		NK



THE EC135 PILOT reports departing Tatenhill on a HEMS tasking. Shortly after departure another aircraft was seen at a range of 3nm, passing left to right and higher than their level altitude. He called the traffic to the helicopter crew for observation; it appeared to be tracking slightly behind. Having just left Tatenhill frequency, he called Birmingham Radar for a Basic Service and reported the other traffic in case its pilot was also working the Birmingham frequency. The other 'Robin like' aircraft was then observed to roll abruptly right and descend towards their current track, towards Tatenhill. Avoiding action was taken by rolling left away from the conflict, with the other aircraft passing close down the starboard side on a reciprocal course. The Airprox was initially reported on Birmingham Radar frequency with a follow up call by telephone later.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'High'.

THE LIGHT AIRCRAFT PILOT could not be traced.

THE BIRMINGHAM CONTROLLER did not file a report.

Factual Background

The weather at East Midlands was recorded as follows:

METAR EGNX 301520Z 27014KT 9999 SCT042 18/06 Q1019

Analysis and Investigation

CAA ATSI

CAA ATSI had access to a transcript of the Birmingham RTF. The EC135 pilot made an initial call to Birmingham Radar, requested and was given a Basic Service. He also reported visual with traffic in his 11 o'clock position which the Birmingham controller acknowledged. 90 seconds later, the EC135 pilot reported that the traffic he had previously been visual with had subsequently turned towards him, requiring him to take avoiding action. The Birmingham controller stated that coverage was poor in that area, that she thought she had seen a primary contact in that area, but that there was no secondary radar information.

Under a Basic Service there is no requirement to continually monitor the flight. A report by Birmingham ATC, confirmed that the helicopter had not been identified and was only painting intermittently on their radar. A review of area radar recordings also failed to show either the helicopter or any conflicting traffic in his vicinity. If a primary contact had been visible to the Birmingham controller, they would not necessarily be able to correlate that with the aircraft reported by the helicopter pilot. As the pilot of the helicopter had already reported visual with the traffic against which he subsequently took avoiding action, it could be assumed that he would maintain his own separation against that traffic.

UKAB Secretariat

The EC135 and light aircraft pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard¹. If the incident geometry was converging, as reported, the light aircraft pilot was required to give way to the EC135². The EC135 first appeared on area radar when 2nm west-northwest of the reported position, and some 1½min after the reported time of CPA. A radar return with VFR squawk was observed approaching the reported position of the Airprox at the corresponding time. The aircraft return indicated a descent but faded when 1.6nm west-southwest of, and 40sec before, reported CPA. Although each aircraft appeared separately on area radar recordings, they did not do so together in the reported vicinity of the CPA.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when an EC135 and a light aircraft flew into proximity at about 1510 on Thursday 30th July 2015. Both pilots were operating in VMC, the EC135 pilot under VFR and in receipt of a Basic Service. The light aircraft pilot could not be traced.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of a report from the EC135 pilot, radar photographs/video recordings and a report from the appropriate ATC authority.

Members first discussed the pilots' actions and wondered whether the light aircraft pilot had seen the EC135. Given the reported sudden manoeuvre and reduced separation at CPA, it was considered unlikely that this was the case. On the other hand, the EC135 pilot had seen the light aircraft at range and was able to monitor it and subsequently take effective avoiding action when he saw it turning towards him. In the absence any further information on which to base an assessment of the geometry and separation, members commended the EC135 pilot for actively monitoring the light aircraft, which they felt he had probably seen as early as prevailing circumstances permitted, and agreed that he had taken the action necessary to significantly reduce the risk of collision. It had simply been unfortunate that the light aircraft had rapidly turned towards him as they closed, although members commented that there may have been value in the EC135 pilot considering an early turn

¹ SERA.3205 Proximity.

² SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c) (2) Converging.

away on the first sighting just to account for such eventualities. The premise being that one should never assume that the other pilot is aware of one's presence and may therefore manoeuvre unexpectedly, as happened in this case, given that they cannot be expected to give way to an aircraft they are not aware of.

Based on the information available, and noting that the circumstances of the light aircraft pilot were unknown, members agreed that the cause of the Airprox was a conflict of flight paths in Class G airspace, and that the EC135 pilot had resolved the conflict. Some members felt that the reported separation was such that safety margins had been much reduced and they wanted to classify the risk as Category B. However, in the discussion that followed, the counter view was that the EC135 pilot was visual with the light aircraft throughout the encounter and was always ready to manoeuvre if required; in the end, the majority opinion was therefore that effective and, given the circumstances, timely action had been taken to prevent the aircraft colliding.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: A conflict in Class G resolved by the EC135 pilot.

Degree of Risk: C.