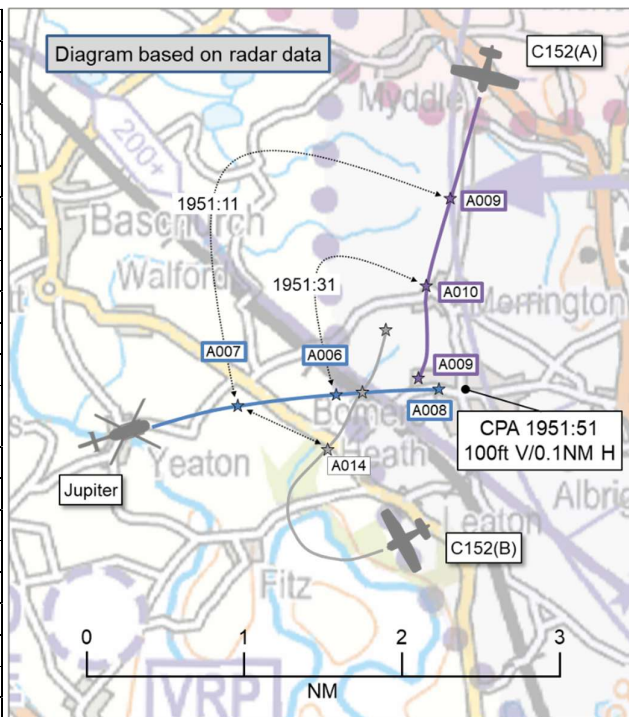


AIRPROX REPORT No 2026016

Date: 05 Mar 2026 Time: 1952Z Position: 5246N 00247W Location: Bomere Heath

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Jupiter	C152(A)
Operator	HQ Air (Trg)	Civ FW
Airspace	Shawbury MATZ	London FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Basic	AGCS
Provider	Shawbury Tower	Sleep Radio
Altitude/FL	800ft	900ft
Transponder	A, C, S+	A, C, S+
Reported		
Colours	Dark blue/yellow	White, blue
Lighting	Nav, anti-col	Strobe, nav, beacon
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	>10km	5-10km
Altitude/FL	700ft	1200ft
Altimeter	QNH (1015hPa)	QFE
Heading	090°	180°
Speed	NR	90kt
ACAS/TAS	TAS	Not fitted
Alert	TA	N/A
	Separation at CPA	
Reported	200ft V/200m H	200ft V/200m H
Recorded	100ft V/0.1NM H	



THE JUPITER PILOT reports that, on completion of some approaches in the Nesscliffe Training Area, the aircraft was recovered to RAF Shawbury. Initially, a climb was completed to 1000ft QNH but, because of the visible presence of lower cloud ahead, the altitude was reduced to 800ft. Operations from Sleep airfield had been notified at the Night Brief and activity had been seen earlier in the sortie. The Handling Pilot (HP) noted an ACAS contact in the 1 o'clock, indicating approximately 3 miles range and 400ft above; it appeared to be moving to their right-hand-side. This track seemed to change direction to cross from right-to-left and was indicating a descent. Although not visual with this traffic due to cloud, the HP was aware of strobe 'glow' from within the cloud in the right 1 o'clock using NVD, and elected to descend to 400ft AGL. ATC provided Traffic Information on two contacts (one left, one right) while, at the same time, the ACAS provided an aural alert. The LHS pilot and two rear-crew members visually identified traffic in the 11 o'clock which commenced a left-hand turn and passed down the left of the aircraft. Meanwhile, the HP noted that the lights of the previous aircraft passed overhead before descending out of cloud and potentially presenting a conflict with the other fixed-wing aircraft. It was assessed that the vertical separation was 200-300ft from both fixed-wing aircraft. Lateral separation on the left-hand aircraft was possibly 200m. The crew completed the visual recovery to Shawbury and, following a discussion in dispersal amongst the crew, the Aircraft Commander informed ATC and Unit Operations of the intent to submit an Airprox report.

[The pilot of the Jupiter commented that] most internal tasks for the routine recovery had been completed. The workload was increased due to the threat. By comparison to day, visibility was less good due to the night environment, field of view offered by NVD and cloud layers in proximity. The situational awareness offered by ACAS, ATC transmissions and the eyes of four crewmembers were all beneficial. However, the split threat degraded overall situational awareness. In addition, ACAS required a diversion from their external lookout.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

THE C152(A) PILOT reports that the weather was closing in. They had a solo student [in C152(B)], just to the south of the airfield, so they headed out that way to shepherd them home. They saw the Juno [they believe] at low level, with its distinctive strobe light, crossing right-to-left. They were talking to their student to find out where they were. They suggested that [the student] home to the overhead to find a gap. They were also talking to Sleep Radio because they were watching on ADS-B.

With the weather closing in, they assumed that RAF Shawbury would have stopped flying. They suspect the [Jupiter] was just approaching the Harmer Hill gate. They did not feel there was an issue but, [later], received the [Airprox notification].

They call RAF Shawbury if they know that they are night flying, mostly so their controllers have situational awareness of their movements. Every time they call, they are told that they are NOTAM'd closed. It is not NOTAM'd, but it is notified.

[The pilot of C152(A) opined that,] whenever they call the zone controller after 1700, they say that they are not offering a service even though they are clearly there, watching on radar and listening to the radio. They only call them up to let them know of their movements, but they seem [uninterested] so they have given up trying. It might have been helpful this night.

[The pilot of C152(A) reported that] no avoiding action had been necessary as they had clearly seen [the Jupiter] moving right-to-left [(sighted at a reported range of 400m in their 1 o'clock position)].

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'None'.

THE C152(B) PILOT (as a witness) reports that [this had been] a short local flight in VMC to complete the remaining 20min of their night rating. Upon tracking to Sleep, [they were] caught in inadvertent IMC and descended to remain VFR. When descending, [they were] visual with rotary traffic tracking east-to-west [west-to-east] approximately 500ft below, and visual with nav lights in the dark.

[The pilot of C152(B) commented that they did not take avoiding action as the] path was not conflicting.

The pilot assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

THE SHAWBURY CONTROLLER reports that they were the ADC and ATCO in-charge for the shift when [the Jupiter] pilot stated they were going to file an Airprox after landing following their night sortie.

When the pilot reported changing from Stud 4 to Stud 2, there were two Sleep aircraft roughly 4NM ahead. [The controller] had already made the decision to call the tracks once the pilot checked-in on Stud 2. The two conflictors were called at roughly 2-3NM away on the first instance, and the pilot elected to descend by around 200ft to build in some vertical separation against the aircraft leaving the Sleep ATZ. They called the tracks again when separated by roughly 1NM. "*Visual with both tracks*" was the response from the pilot.

The [Jupiter pilot] was completing a normal procedure for a night recovery. One [of the C152] aircraft was 400-500ft above, however, the second was indicating 1000ft directly in line with the Western Gates, inside the MATZ. The [Jupiter pilot] proceeded to recover as normal. While taxiing back, they thanked ATC for the Traffic Information then, around 2-3min later, informed [the controller] through Stud 2 that they will be filing an Airprox.

Timeline:

Time	To	From	Message
1950:33	ADC	[Jupiter c/s]	Shawbury Tower [Jupiter c/s] with information Charlie join [...] for dispersal.

1950:42	[Jupiter c/s]	ADC	[Jupiter c/s] Shawbury Tower join surface wind three-two-zero one-zero and area right clear.
1950:47	ADC	[Jupiter c/s]	Clear join [Jupiter c/s].
1950:52	[Jupiter c/s]	ADC	Uh [Jupiter c/s] we do have Sleaf traffic around you uh right one o'clock half mile manoeuvring indicating six hundred feet above but also one left eleven o'clock two miles converging indicating two hundred feet above.
1951:06	ADC	[Jupiter c/s]	Uh traffic copied not visual and uh descending for the two hundred foot above traffic.
1951:27	[Jupiter c/s]	ADC	Uh [Jupiter c/s] the previously reported lower traffic is now left eleven o'clock one mile crossing left to right four hundred feet above.
1951:31	ADC	[Jupiter c/s]	Visual we've found both traffic [Jupiter c/s].

The controller perceived the severity of the incident as 'Medium'.

THE SLEAP RADIO AGO reports that [the pilot of C152(B) called for airfield information when [approaching] the airfield from the north of Shrewsbury after a short solo night navigation exercise. The weather at that point quickly shifted from light winds and good visibility to approximately 320/25kt and a cloudbase of approximately 500ft at the end of the downwind leg of RW23 (which was in use at the time). Upon reaching the ATZ boundary from the south, the pilot said that they had lost visual with the airfield, so they orbited and headed south in order to remain VMC. After the pilot re-orientated themselves whilst orbiting overhead Bomere Heath, [the pilot of C152(A)] said that they would attempt to locate [C152(B)] and guide the pilot back to the airfield. At that time, [the AGO] viewed [an ADS-B tracking website] which showed a Shawbury-based EC145 tracking east-to-west [UKAB Secretariat note: their route had been west-to-east] which appeared to pass under the C152 traffic. The pilot [of C152(B)] was not visual with the rotary traffic [they believe], likely due to a high workload. The pilot [of C152(B)] landed safely on RW05 in strong crosswinds.

Factual Background

The UK AIP (ENR 4.1.6) provides the following information regarding the provision of LARS from RAF Shawbury:

4.1.6 ATS Units Participating in the Lower Airspace Radar

Unit	Position	Frequency (MHz)/Channel	Service Radius (NM)	Availability/ Remarks
Shawbury	524737N 0024005W	133.155	40	Mon-Fri 0830-1700 (0730-1630).

The weather at RAF Shawbury was recorded as follows:

TAF EGOS 051642Z 0518/0602 17006KT 9999 FEW030 PROB30 TEMPO 0518/0519 7000 RA SCT022 BECMG 0519/0522 BKN018 TEMPO 0519/0602 7000 RA PROB40 TEMPO 0519/0602 4000 RADZ SCT012=

METAR EGOS 051950Z 32006KT 6000 HZ BKN030 11/10 Q1014 BECMG BKN020 RMK WHT BECMG WHT METAR EGOS 052020Z 33016KT 9999 FEW008 BKN030 08/06 Q1015 TEMPO 6000 RA SCT010 RMK BLU TEMPO GRN

Analysis and Investigation

RAF Shawbury Unit Investigation

The Airprox was between [the pilot of the Jupiter], recovering through Harmer Hill VFR gate [UKAB Secretariat note: they had been recovering through Pim gate] at 800ft AMSL at the end of a night-flying sortie, and [the pilots of] two GA fixed-wing light-aircraft in the process of recovering to Sleaf aerodrome at the end of their night-flying sortie.

The pilot of the [Jupiter] reported sighting one of the fixed-wing tracks in the right 1 o'clock, 400ft above at 3NM range, passing down the right-hand side of the [Jupiter]. Then, moments later, the other fixed-wing aircraft (in the left, 11 o'clock) passed down the left-hand side of the [Jupiter] at an assessed lateral separation of 200m.

There are four reasons behind the justification of no [further] action:

1. This Airprox was an isolated occurrence.
2. The circumstances of its occurrence are highly unusual:

[The pilot of C152(B)], conducting night-flying, lost visual contact with Sleaf airfield while attempting to make a recovery and, therefore, turned to the south to regain VMC.

[The pilot of C152(A)] then attempted to fly towards the lost aircraft to guide it back to the aerodrome, causing the unique situation of having the Shawbury aircraft recovering above and below two GA aircraft.

3. The preventative barriers worked: ACAS, visual lookout and Traffic Information from the ADC/LL controller meant that the handling-pilot and crew became visual with the GA tracks.
4. There is currently good communication between Sleaf and RAF Shawbury regarding night-flying operations. Further, while Shawbury controllers monitor the Zone VHF frequency, [the pilots of] GA aircraft flying out of Sleaf will remain on the Sleaf VHF frequency for the duration of their sortie. This, coupled with current controller staffing commitments at night, means that the ADC/LL controller would be unable to provide a Basic Service to [the pilots of] GA aircraft, such as those involved in this Airprox, as a matter of course.

All parties in this occurrence reported reduced visibility and rapidly changing weather. The [pilot of the Jupiter] had descended from the usual 1000ft AMSL for recovery through the VFR gates to 800ft due to seeing cloud ahead. The student GA pilot reported a change of light winds and good visibility to a wind of 320/25kt and a cloudbase of 500ft at the downwind leg of the Sleaf circuit for RW23.

In this occurrence, an Airprox was declared by the handling pilot of the Shawbury rotary [aircraft], who had to descend from 800ft AMSL to 400ft AGL to avoid the GA aircraft in the right one-o'clock. While the aircraft in the left 11 o'clock was sighted by the [pilot in the] LHS and rear crew, the student pilot was never visual with the recovering Shawbury rotary [aircraft], [they believe], due to high workload, [whilst] attempting to recover to Sleaf after becoming lost due to the visibility.

Military ATM

Having reviewed the Jupiter pilot's report, controller's [incident report], tape transcript and radar replay, 2Gp BM is satisfied that the controller acted appropriately.

UKAB Secretariat

An analysis of the NATS radar replay was undertaken and the three aircraft could be positively identified from Mode S data. The Jupiter and C152(A), but not C152(B) were observed by reference to ADS-B data sources.

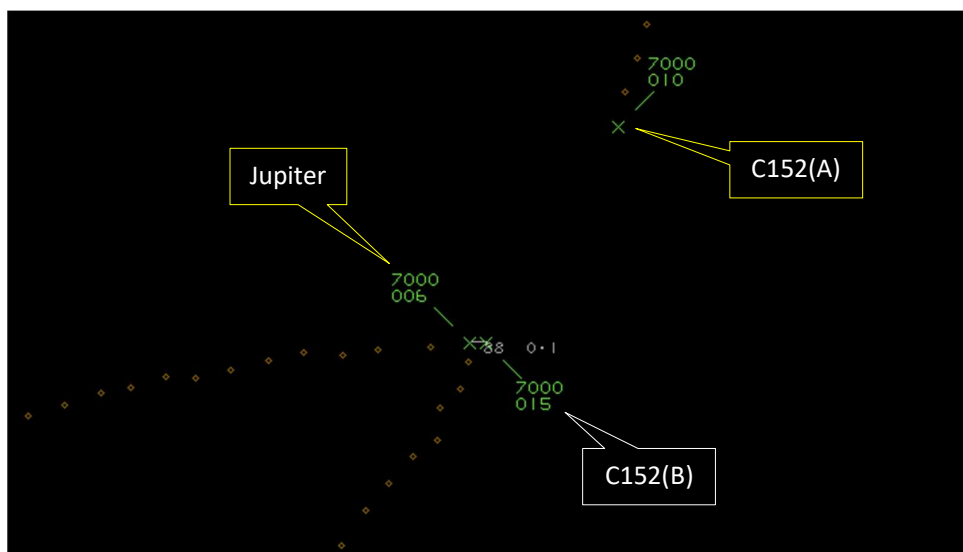


Figure 1 – Aircraft positions at 1951:31

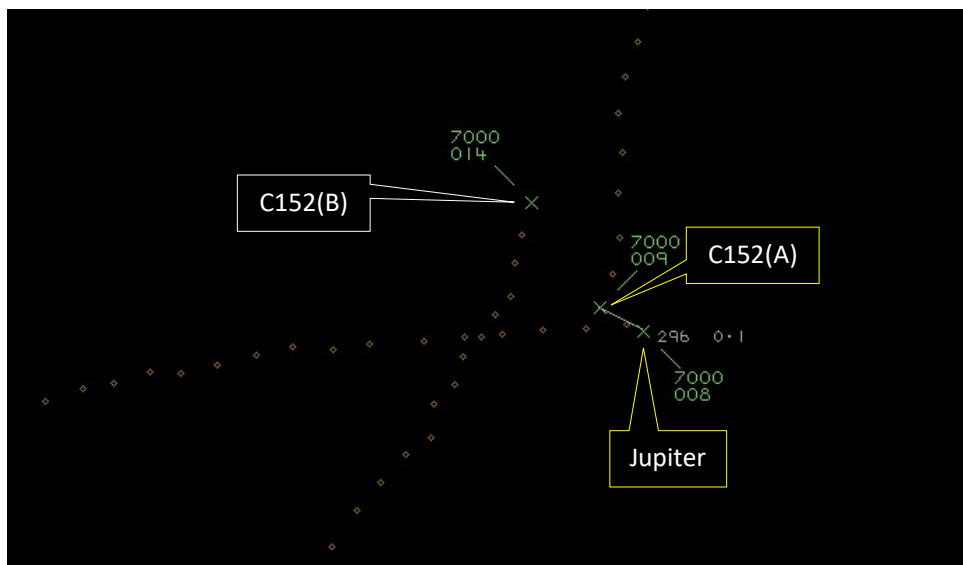


Figure 2 – CPA at 1951:51

The Jupiter and C152(A) pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard.¹ If the incident geometry is considered as converging then the C152(A) pilot was required to give way to the Jupiter.²

Comments

HQ Air Command

The Airprox occurred in Class G airspace as the Jupiter pilot was returning from Nesscliffe TA to RAF Shawbury. While activity from Sleaf airfield had been notified, the flightpaths of both C152(A) and C152(B), as caused by the deteriorating weather, could not have been predicted and so it was not possible to deconflict the sorties at the planning stage. Using ACAS information and lookout, the crew were aware of C152(B) to the south of their track. Having already descended from the standard Pim Gate height of 1000ft QNH to 800ft QNH due to weather, the crew elected to descend further to 400ft AGL and pass under the conflicting traffic. The RAF Shawbury controller then passed Traffic Information on both C152(B) and C152(A) and the ACAS provided an aural alert. This allowed

¹ (UK) SERA.3205 Proximity. MAA RA 2307 paragraphs 1 and 2.
² (UK) SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c)(2) Converging. MAA RA 2307 paragraph 12.

the LHS pilot and both rear crew to visually acquire C152(A) and observe it turn to pass down the left-hand side of their aircraft above their altitude. The combination of lookout, ACAS information, and Traffic Information from the RAF Shawbury controller allowed the crew to take appropriate action to avoid a collision.

AOPA

It is heartening to see a good working relationship between the two airfields. A radar-based service available to general aviation pilots could have assisted in the avoidance of this Airprox. This could have resulted in assistance from the controller to the pilot with the identification of their position and a direction to fly to the airfield. In rapidly changing weather conditions, such that had occurred, contacting the Distress and Diversion Cell on 121.500MHz could also have provided safety assistance (see Safety Sense leaflet 33).³

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Jupiter and a C152 flew into proximity at Bomere Heath at 1952Z on Thursday 5th March 2026. The Jupiter pilot was operating under VFR in VMC in receipt of a Basic Service from Shawbury Tower, and the C152 pilot was operating under VFR in VMC in receipt of an AGCS from Sleaf Radio.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, reports from the air traffic controller and AGO involved, radar photographs/video recordings and reports from the appropriate operating authorities. Relevant contributory factors mentioned during the Board's discussions are highlighted within the text in bold, with the numbers referring to the Contributory Factors table displayed in Part C.

The Board first considered the actions of the pilot of the Jupiter. It was noted that, due to the presence of low cloud along their route, they had descended from the standard 'gate height' of 1000ft to 800ft AMSL. Subsequently, they had received Traffic Information from the Shawbury Tower controller regarding two contacts, one to their right and 600ft above them (which had been C152(B)) and one to their left and 200ft above them (which had been C152(A)). The pilot of the Jupiter initiated a descent to 400ft AGL to provide adequate vertical clearance. It was agreed that the TAS fitted to the Jupiter had also provided an alert to the presence of C152(A) and C152(B) (**CF3**). Members noted that both C152 aircraft were subsequently visually acquired with the aid of NVD and assistance from the rear crew and LHS pilot of the Jupiter.

Attention turned to the actions of the pilot of C152(A), and members pondered the TAF issued at 1642 and the METAR observed at 1950. It was agreed that it may have been prudent to have taken a more cautious view of the forecasted conditions and that it may have been preferable to have postponed their student's sortie or, perhaps, to have suggested that they remain in the circuit at Sleaf. However, the pilot of C152(B) had ventured further from Sleaf and had encountered intermittent IMC. Members noted that the pilot of C152(A) had considered that the appropriate action had been to have shepherded them back to the airfield. Members suggested that the C152(A) had not been suitably equipped to have embarked on such a flight. It was pointed out that there had been no electronic means by which they could have detected the location of C152(B), or their proximity to any other traffic in the area, and they had not been in receipt of a surveillance-based service which might have assisted their efforts. Members appreciated that the actions of the C152(A) pilot had been well-intentioned, but emphasised that heading towards another aircraft at night, at a low altitude, in intermittent IMC and without the aforementioned safety barriers in place, may well have resulted in a far more serious outcome. Members agreed that, fundamentally, the pilot of C152(A) had planned and prepared their flight, and their student's flight, insufficiently (**CF1**).

It was agreed that the pilot of C152(A) had not had situational awareness of the presence of the Jupiter (**CF2**) until they had visually acquired it at a reported distance of 400m. Members noted that they had

³ <https://www.caa.co.uk/data-and-publications/publications/documents/content/safety-sense-vfr-into-imc/>

described that no avoiding action had been necessary, although it was pointed out that the separation had subsequently reduced further.

Turning to the actions of the Sleep AGO, it was noted that they had used an ADS-B tracking website to provide some indication of the possible locations of the aircraft involved. Members emphasised that that data source is unofficial and unapproved, and could not have been used in any capacity to have provided assistance to the pilots involved. Members were in agreement that there had been little that the Sleep AGO could have done to have assisted matters.

The Board next considered the actions of the Shawbury Tower controller, and members noted that they had utilised the Aerodrome Traffic Monitor (ATM) and had provided Traffic Information to the Jupiter pilot. Members agreed that, although the Jupiter pilot would not have expected to have received Traffic Information under the terms of the service being provided, the information had enabled them to visually acquire the two C152s and to consider the safest course of action.

Members concluded the discussion and considered the risk of collision. It was agreed that safety margins had been reduced and that the pilot of the Jupiter had been concerned at the proximity of C152(A) in challenging weather conditions and at night (CF4). Some members suggested that there had been a risk of collision and that it had been largely providential that the separation had not reduced further. Other members countered that the crew of the Jupiter had gleaned early enough situational awareness of the C152s, and had visually acquired them in time to have taken further avoiding action if required. A vote was cast and the latter view prevailed. The Board concluded that there had not been a risk of collision, but agreed that safety had been degraded and assigned Risk Category C to this event.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS AND RISK

Contributory Factors:

2026016				
CF	Factor	Description	ECCAIRS Amplification	UKAB Amplification
Flight Elements				
• Tactical Planning and Execution				
1	Human Factors	• Pre-flight briefing and flight preparation	An event involving incorrect, poor or insufficient pre-flight briefing	
• Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action				
2	Contextual	• Situational Awareness and Sensory Events	Events involving a flight crew's awareness and perception of situations	Pilot had no, late, inaccurate or only generic, Situational Awareness
• Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance				
3	Contextual	• Other warning system operation	An event involving a genuine warning from an airborne system other than TCAS.	
• See and Avoid				
4	Human Factors	• Perception of Visual Information	Events involving flight crew incorrectly perceiving a situation visually and then taking the wrong course of action or path of movement	Pilot was concerned by the proximity of the other aircraft

Degree of Risk: C.

Safety Barrier Assessment⁴

In assessing the effectiveness of the safety barriers associated with this incident, the Board concluded that the key factors had been that:

⁴ The UK Airprox Board scheme for assessing the Availability, Functionality and Effectiveness of safety barriers can be found on the [UKAB Website](#).

Flight Elements:

Tactical Planning and Execution was assessed as **partially effective** because sufficient pre-flight preparation, undertaken by the pilot of C152(A), may have revealed more challenging weather conditions than anticipated for their (and their student's) flight.

Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft and Action were assessed as **ineffective** because the pilot of C152(A) had not had situational awareness of the presence of the Jupiter.

Airprox Barrier Assessment: 2026016		Outside Controlled Airspace						
Barrier	Provision	Application	Effectiveness					
			Barrier Weighting					
			0%	5%	10%	15%	20%	
Ground Element	Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance	✓	✓					
	Manning & Equipment	✓	✓					
	Situational Awareness of the Confliction & Action	✓	✓					
	Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance	○	○					
Flight Element	Regulations, Processes, Procedures and Compliance	✓	✓					
	Tactical Planning and Execution	✓	!					
	Situational Awareness of the Conflicting Aircraft & Action	✗	✓					
	Electronic Warning System Operation and Compliance	!	✓					
	See & Avoid	✓	✓					
Key:			Full	Partial	None	Not Present/Not Assessable	Not Used	
Provision	✓	!	✗	○				
Application	✓	!	✗	○			○	
Effectiveness								