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Dear Mr Paintin,

FIREWORKS ENDANGERING AIRCRAFT

Thank you for your further letter of 20 January 2004 about the potential danger to aircraft pilots from fireworks.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) provides guidance on this subject in the form of a Civil Aviation Publication (CAP736- Guide for the Operation of Lasers, Searchlights and Fireworks in United Kingdom Airspace). This publication was updated just last month and is freely available on the CAA website (www.caa.co.uk). I am attaching a hard copy for easy reference. It points out the hazards of dazzling pilots, not only with fireworks but also lightshows and lasers and how to avoid causing problems within the vicinity of aerodromes. The document is aimed at those responsible organisers who will be happy to follow its guidance. To place restrictions around all aerodromes would involve a change to legislation.

There is already sufficient legislation in place in respect to endangering an aircraft, through the application of Article 63 of the Air Navigation Order 2000. This article is concerned with "Endangering safety of an aircraft". Any further necessary action is a matter of enforcement by the police. Meanwhile the Department shall continue to encourage the reporting of all occurrences to the CAA to allow for a full examination of the problem.

Yours sincerely,

RICHARD EVANS