

Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia - Procedural Guideline



The Sydney Opera House from R405

One of the most spectacular scenic flights in Australia is the flight up Sydney Harbour from Ryde to the Heads of Sydney Harbour along the designated route "R405".

And one of the best things about R405, apart from the breathtaking views of one of the best cities in the world, is that it is only available for seaplanes (Oh, and helicopters).

You fly at 500ft from Ryde Rail Bridge to the Southern Pylon of the Harbour Bridge following the Parramatta River waterway. Once east of the Harbour Bridge you climb not above 1,000ft following the harbour and remaining over water to the heads.

We are blessed to be able to use this corridor, but to ensure that we can continue to utilize it, and fly in safety, there are some procedures we must follow, and some that are strongly recommended.

The procedures for R405 are covered in ERSA FAC Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Section 14, and are summarized below. Additional recommendations are in italics.

- 1. R405 is restricted to VMC conditions & day only.
- 2. Aircraft to Squawk CODE 1200
- 3. Seaplanes are confined to the transit lane except when on climb or decent to landing sites adjacent to the lane.
- 4. Seaplanes to keep over water at all times.
- 5. *Minimize noise impacts to shoreline residences.*
- 6. *The lane is narrow with frequent aircraft traffic, keep your landing lights ON.*
- 7. In R405A (West of Harbour Bridge) maintain 500ft on QNH.
- 8. In R405B (East of H/Bridge) not above 1,000ft on QNH.
- 9. Do not use helicopter access lanes.
- 10. No operations below Harbour & Gladesville Bridges.

It is our privilege to fly this spectacular route. Fly neighbourly and carefully to ensure our access to it is preserved.

- 11. Broadcast intentions on entering and leaving the lane on 120.8MHz. 120.8MHz is not monitored by Airservices Australia. Emergency calls on 124.55MHz.
- 12. *At 2 NM West of Ryde Bridge, broadcast your intention to join the lane on 120.8. Maintain careful watch for aircraft entering and leaving the lane in this area. Take care to avoid 2GB Radio Mast (739ft) 500m west of Ryde Bridge on Southern shore.*
- 13. *Broadcast passing Ryde Bridge. "Traffic R405, Seaplane REG, Ryde Bridge, 500ft, heading <Direction> (Eastbound) for <Destination> (North Head), R405"*
- 14. *Broadcast passing Gladesville Bridge.*
- 15. *Broadcast at Southern Pylon of Harbour Bridge.*

- 16. *When immediately East of the Harbour Bridge, keep to the centre of the waterway remaining well clear of the Opera House (South side) and Admiralty House (North side).*
- 17. *Broadcast passing Bradley's Head.*
- 18. *Broadcast passing North Head with intentions, e.g. "flying north coastal, not above 1500ft"*
- 19. *When in the Harbour Transit Lane keep to the right of the lane.*
- 20. *Sydney Harbour is a busy waterway with large and complex wake patterns producing conditions that can be dangerous for water landings. For privately owned and smaller type seaplanes, water operations in Sydney Harbour waters should be avoided in all but emergency situations (most particularly in Rose Bay). Due to the highly sensitive environment of Sydney Harbour anyone wishing to operate in R405 or Sydney Harbour waterways, should obtain a briefing before hand.*

Keith Clark & Rob Loneragan (July 2012)



Heading West in R-405 approaching the Bridge - on descent to cross the south pylon at 500ft

