RED ARROWS PULL OUT OF FARNBOROUGH AIR SHOW AEROBATICS AFTER SHOREHAM DISASTER

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The Red Arrows will not perform aerobatic stunts at Britain's biggest air show for the first time in more than 50 years, because of safety fears after the Shoreham disaster.

RAF chiefs have decided the risks of flying high-speed manoeuvres at low heights over built-up areas at the Farnborough Air Show are no longer "tolerable", and the jets will be restricted to flypasts.

The decision means the RAF's world famous aerobatic team will not perform one of their crowd-pleasing routines at the flagship air industry show for the first time in their 52-year-history.

Aviation enthusiasts described the decision as a "huge disappointment" for crowds of up to 80,000 people expected to attend the Hampshire show next month.

Farnborough is the latest air show to curtail or cancel displays this year after the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) imposed tight new safety regulations after the Shoreham crash.

Eleven men were killed when a vintage Hawker Hunter jet ploughed into the A27 during a display on August 22 last year.

11 people died when a Hawker Hunter crashed at Shoreham in August 2015

Air Vice-Marshal Andrew Turner, in charge of safety for the Red Arrows, said there had been a

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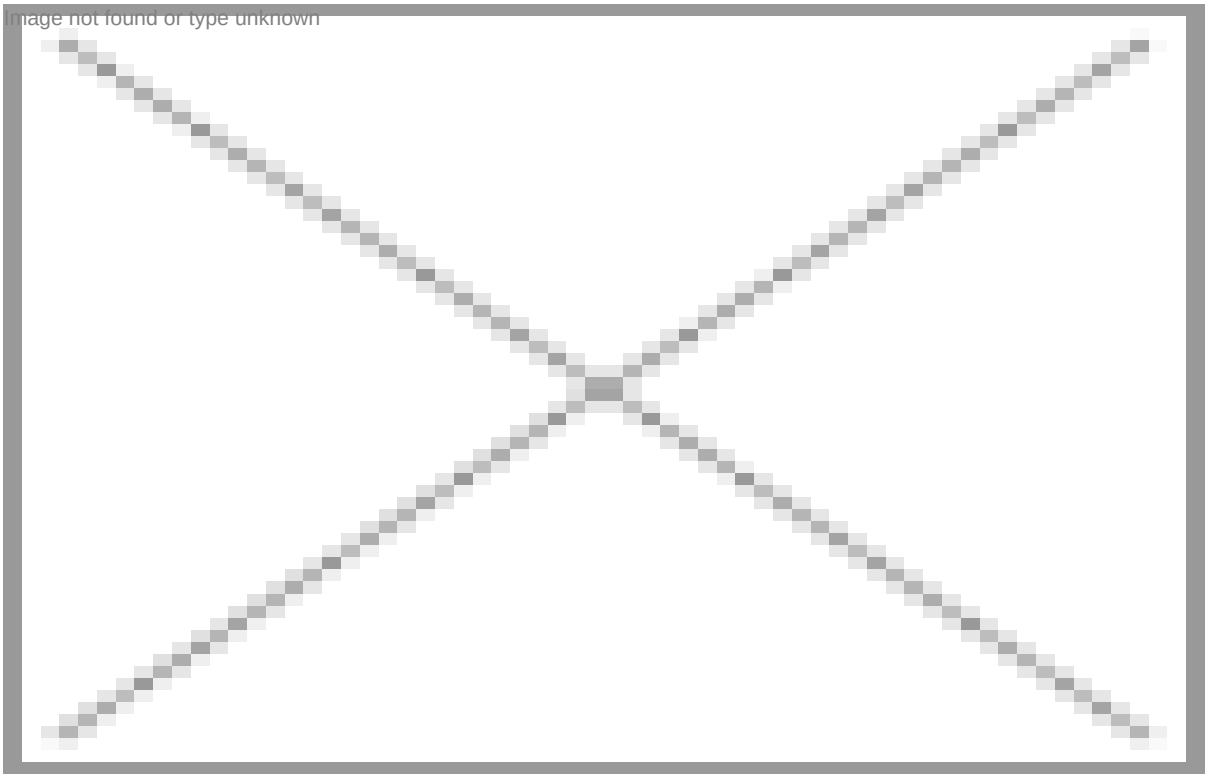
period of “introspection” after the Shoreham crash and the RAF had decided the risk at Farnborough was no longer “tolerable”. The risk has increased as Farnborough Airport has become increasingly hemmed in by houses and buildings over the years.

The Red Arrows’ normal 22-minute display ranges over a five mile area and features nine jets passing each other as close as 15ft apart, while travelling at 800mph at a height of sometimes only 50ft above the tree tops.

An aircraft malfunction, bird strike or collision at that speed could cause “multiple third-party casualties”, he said.

He said: “The position we find ourselves in is either we seek to clear the area of civilians, or we tolerate the risk and frankly right now, we the RAF have decided that that is not a risk worth bearing given the Shoreham public reaction.”



AVM Turner said it was not possible, given the time, to tailor the Red Arrows normal display specifically for Farnborough.

The display team will still attend, but will be restricted to flypasts and ground demonstrations. He said the team still intended to display at all other air shows where they are booked to appear.

An RAF spokesman said: “The high speed and dynamic nature of the traditional Red Arrow’s display is no longer appropriate due to the large amounts of local housing, business areas and major transport links underneath the planned display area.”

Howard Wheeldon, an aerospace analyst said: “Clearly it’s a huge disappointment, but it has been done for all the right reasons and I am not surprised given the tight restrictions put on air shows by the CAA.”

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Organisers said no other air displays had cancelled at the biennial show and there would still be aerobatic displays. The size and scale of the Red Arrows display makes it uniquely risky.

A statement for the air show said: “In light of the accident at Shoreham last year the nature of their display will change. The RAF has conducted an assessment of the risk associated with flying their display at Farnborough. Due to the high speed and dynamic nature of the Red Arrows aerobatic routine, the RAF has decided it will not be possible for them to perform their traditional display at Farnborough this year.”

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