OTAS LIVE

Supporting Events and Professionals at Every Stage

Who Owns the Sky Above Your Event?

A flyover before an NFL game in Seattle, where pyro was reportedly fired while the last helicopter was overhead, and who holds the stop when aircraft and effects share the same sky

Correct as of 3 November 2026

Two planned moments, one sky.

4 helicopters on a flyover before the game [1]

Four crew members walk out to a helicopter. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

The facts, as reported

4

helicopters on a flyover before the game [1]

1

still overhead as pyro fired [4][5]

0

injuries publicly reported [4][5]

01

What was reported

THE FLYOVER

- Four military helicopters [1]
- Before kick off, 2 November [2]
- Route practised a week before [3]

THE PYRO

- Fired with the last aircraft overhead [4]
- Came very close [4][5]
- No injuries reported [4][5]



Launch points

Under the flight path

Fireworks rise above a large stage roof over an empty field. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

What UK rules say

FLYING

- CAA permission for displays [7]
- Unsafe displays stopped [8]
- 1,000 ft over crowds [12]

EFFECTS

- Positions and timings briefed [8]
- Never at aircraft [9]
- 7 days' notice to the CAA [10]



Landing areas

Marked and held clear

A marshal with a radio watches a helicopter lift off. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

A contrast

PLANNED AS ONE SHOW	SEATTLE, AS REPORTED
One clock for all [21]	Stadium pyro [4]
Own block of sky [21]	A separate flyover [4]
Pyro permission per site [8]	Came very close [5]
Ground observer [8]	

Fire on clear, not on the clock

1 One running order

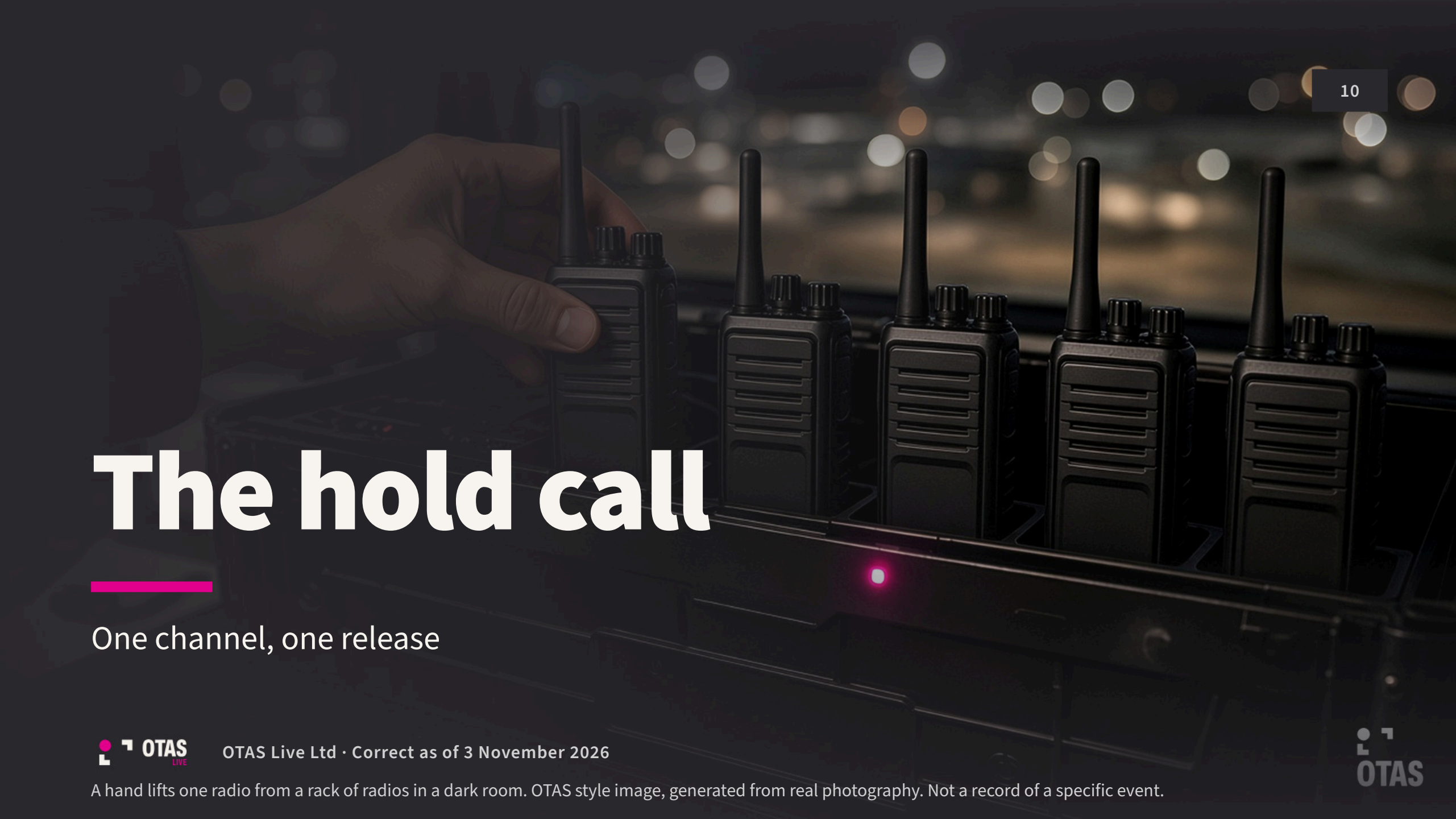
2 Aircraft called clear

3 Show caller releases

4 Effect fires

5 Hold if in doubt

OTAS guidance.



The hold call

One channel, one release

A hand lifts one radio from a rack of radios in a dark room. OTAS style image, generated from real photography. Not a record of a specific event.

05

Six things to agree

THE PLAN

- One running order
- Launch points
- The owner

THE STOP

- The hold call
- The clear call
- Notifications

06

Signs aircraft and effects are planned apart

OTAS guidance, drawn from CAA and industry guidance.

01 Two running orders

02 Launch points not mapped

03 Cues on the clock

04 No hold call

05 Apart in rehearsal

07

Five stages, from the plan to the night



STAGE 1

One plan

Aircraft and effects together

STAGE 2

Owners

Who releases the hold

STAGE 3

Notify

CAA and safety group

STAGE 4

Rehearse

At the real timings

STAGE 5

On the night

Clear call, then fire

From the plan in this Insight. OTAS guidance.

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The hold call

TO HOLD	TO RELEASE
All effects, hold	Spotter: aircraft clear
Each firer answers	Show caller: go

Roles

WHO OWNS WHAT

- Flying Display Director: flying
- Display Operator: effects
- Spotter: clear call
- Show caller: release
- Organiser: the plan

ON THE NIGHT

- Clear call first
- If in doubt, hold

What to do at each level

Operational

Know the hold call

No clear call, no fire

See it, call hold

Tactical

One running order

Hold the channel

Release on clear

Strategic

Name the owner

Agree the stop

Notify early

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The checklist

BEFORE THE DAY

- One running order
- Launch points mapped
- Notifications in
- Who releases the hold

ON THE NIGHT

- Clear call first
- Log every hold

“

It is of prime importance that Light (temporary) and Fireworks displays are never directed at or towards aircraft or aerodromes.

CAA, CAP 736 [9]

Where the facts come from

1	**Home team video of the flyover before the game by four UH 60M Black Hawk helicopters, Week 8, 2 November 2026**	seahawks.com
2	**Home team game day guide for the Week 8 game on Monday 2 November**	seahawks.com
3	**Local news blog report on low flying military helicopters, 26 October 2026**	westseattleblog.com
4	**UK national newspaper report on a firework and a military helicopter at an NFL game, 3 November 2026**	thesun.co.uk
5	**Brazilian national newspaper report on fireworks passing close to a military helicopter during an NFL game, 3 November 2026**	oglobo.globo.com
6	**FAA, airspace restrictions over sports stadiums**	faa.gov
7	**Air Navigation Order 2016, article 86, flying displays**	legislation.gov.uk

Where the facts come from

8	CAA, CAP 403 Flying Displays and Special Events, Edition 23, February 2026	caa.co.uk
9	CAA, CAP 736 Operation of directed light, fireworks, toy balloons and sky lanterns within UK airspace	caa.co.uk
10	CAA, outdoor lasers, searchlights and fireworks	caa.co.uk
11	Air Navigation Order 2016, article 240, endangering safety of an aircraft	legislation.gov.uk
12	CAA regulatory library, UK SERA.5005 visual flight rules	regulatorylibrary.caa.co.uk
13	Rules of the Air Regulations 2015, Schedule 1, rule 5	legislation.gov.uk
14	CAA, the Drone Code, where you can fly	caa.co.uk

Where the facts come from

15	Air Navigation Order 2016, article 239, restriction of flying regulations	legislation.gov.uk
16	UK Statutory Instrument 2026/907, a restriction of flying regulation for a festival	legislation.gov.uk
17	Explosives Industry Group, Working Together on Firework Displays, 2023	eig2.org.uk
18	HSE, organising firework displays	hse.gov.uk
19	HSE, set clear roles and responsibilities	hse.gov.uk
20	Display team statement on its night display at a major motorsport weekend, 2024	aerosparx.com
21	Royal Aeronautical Society, Painting the sky with colour, 17 September 2024	aerosociety.com

Where the facts come from

22	**Events industry awards entry for the 2025 motorsport weekend ceremonies**	beaworldfestival.com
23	**Ceremony producer credits for the motorsport weekend opening and closing ceremonies**	onthesly.com
24	**Air show agency social media post on the 2025 motorsport weekend, April 2025**	pl.linkedin.com
25	**NTSB, final report WPR16FA183, night aerial pyrotechnic display, 2016**	data.ntsb.gov
26	**NTSB, final report ERA19FA010, night aerobatic pyrotechnic display, 2018**	data.ntsb.gov
27	**Air Navigation Order 2016, article 97, carriage of dangerous goods**	legislation.gov.uk
28	**Explosives Regulations 2014**	legislation.gov.uk

Where the facts come from

29	**Explosives Act (Northern Ireland) 1970**	legislation.gov.uk
30	**CAA, airspace notification of air displays and flypasts**	caa.co.uk
31	**CAA, ORS4 No.1526, general exemption for police flights from SERA minimum heights, 18 February 2022**	caa.co.uk
32	**CAA, ORS4 No.1528, general exemption for air ambulance (HEMS) flights from SERA minimum heights and Visual Flight Rules, 21 February 2022**	caa.co.uk

Web sources opened 3 November 2026 and labelled by source type. Links are for checking only. Listing a source does not mean it endorses OTAS or has worked with OTAS.

OVER TO YOU

If an aircraft was late over your event tonight, who would stop the next pyro cue?

If you need support planning aircraft, drones or aerial effects into your event, reach out to us to see how we can support you.

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