

Isle of Man Civil Aviation Administration

Guidance for operators of small unmanned aircraft in the Isle of Man

The following information is intended to provide guidance for operators of small unmanned aircraft and small unmanned surveillance aircraft in the Isle of Man. References to “the Department” mean the Department of Economic Development of the Isle of Man Government.

As a Crown Dependency of the UK the Isle of Man has its own regulatory system and its own legislation. This normally mirrors UK legislation to a large degree, but may contain some differences. Operators are required to ensure that they comply with IOM legislation.

The relevant legislation that applies in the Isle of Man is contained within Article 97 and 98 of The Air Navigation (Isle of Man) Order 2015 shown below. This legislation applies to both recreational and professional use of these aircraft, however there are more stringent requirements for commercial and surveillance operations.

Operators should ensure that they are familiar with the requirements of these regulations, and comply with any applicable restrictions contained therein.

Small unmanned aircraft

97.—(1) A person must not cause or permit an article or animal (whether or not attached to a parachute) to be dropped from a small unmanned aircraft so as to endanger persons or property.

(2) The person in charge of a small unmanned aircraft may only fly the aircraft if reasonably satisfied that the flight can safely be made.

(3) The person in charge of a small unmanned aircraft must maintain direct, unaided visual contact with the aircraft sufficient to monitor its flight path in relation to other aircraft, persons, vehicles, vessels and structures for the purpose of avoiding collisions.

(4) The person in charge of a small unmanned aircraft that has a mass of more than 7kg excluding its fuel but including any articles or equipment installed in or attached to the aircraft at the commencement of its flight, must not fly the aircraft—

- (a) in Class A, C, D or E airspace unless the permission of the appropriate air traffic control unit has been obtained;
- (b) within an aerodrome traffic zone during the notified hours of watch of the air traffic control unit (if any) at the aerodrome unless the permission of any such air traffic control unit has been obtained; or
- (c) at a height of more than 400 feet above the surface unless it is flying in airspace described in subparagraph (a) or (b) and in accordance with the requirements for the airspace.

(5) The person in charge of a small unmanned aircraft must not fly the aircraft for the purposes of aerial work except in accordance with a permission granted by the Department.

A “small unmanned surveillance aircraft” means a small unmanned aircraft that is equipped to undertake any form of surveillance or data acquisition.

Small unmanned surveillance aircraft

98.—(1) The person in charge of a small unmanned surveillance aircraft must not fly the aircraft in any of the circumstances described in paragraph (2) except in accordance with a permission issued by the Department.

(2) The circumstances referred to in paragraph (1) are—

- (a) over or within 150 metres of a congested area;
- (b) over or within 150 metres of an organised open-air assembly of more than 1,000 persons;
- (c) within 50 metres of a vessel, vehicle or structure that is not under the control of the person in charge of the aircraft; or
- (d) subject to paragraphs (3) and 1(4), within 50 metres of a person.

(3) Subject to paragraph (4), during take-off or landing, a small unmanned surveillance aircraft must not be flown within 30 metres of a person.

(4) Paragraphs (2)d and (3) do not apply to the person in charge of the small unmanned surveillance aircraft or a person under the control of the person in charge of the aircraft.

(5) In this article “a small unmanned surveillance aircraft” means a small unmanned aircraft that is equipped to undertake any form of surveillance or data acquisition.

A “small unmanned aircraft” means an unmanned aircraft, other than a balloon or a kite, having a mass of not more than 20kg without its fuel but including any articles or equipment installed in or attached to the aircraft at the commencement of its flight.

In recent years there has been a large growth in the availability and use of small unmanned aircraft and in particular small unmanned surveillance aircraft. These aircraft range in size and complexity from small lightweight models intended for recreational use by hobbyists, to larger and heavier vehicles that can be equipped with data capture devices for professional use.

Operators of small unmanned aircraft require permission from the Isle of Man Civil Aviation Administration to conduct flights at a height of more than 400 feet above the surface, and also to conduct “aerial work” using a small unmanned aircraft of any mass. Approval from Air Traffic Control is also required for flights of small unmanned aircraft with a mass of more than 7kg in controlled airspace.

Operators of small unmanned aircraft should ensure that in addition to complying with any relevant air navigation legislation, including obtaining permissions where required they take account of “duty of care” and any privacy/data protection considerations when planning a flight. Particular care should be taken when planning a flight close to an airport or over a congested area.

A congested area in relation to a city, town or settlement, means any area which is substantially used for residential, industrial, commercial or recreational purposes.

The Department will normally require the following to be provided with any request for permission to conduct aerial work, for a flight above 400 feet or for operations over or adjacent to a congested area:

- a) Evidence that the operator has completed a course of adequate theoretical knowledge/general airmanship;
- b) Evidence of successful completion of a practical flight assessment on the class of small unmanned aircraft that is to be used;
- c) Evidence of recent flying experience on the class of small unmanned aircraft that is to be used;
- d) A copy of the operations manual; and
- e) Evidence of appropriate insurance to cover any risks associated with the planned flight(s).

NOTE: The requirements of a) to d) may be demonstrated by the submission of a recent permission issued by the UK CAA or other National Supervisory Authority. Certificates obtained following completion of training at a UK CAA National Qualified Entity (NQE) as specified in CAP 722 may also be submitted.

Severe penalties, including a fine of up to £2,500 can be imposed for breach of these regulations.

A copy of The Air Navigation (Isle of Man) Order 2015 may be downloaded free of charge from the [Isle of Man CAA web site](#).

The UK CAA Civil Aviation Publication (CAP 722) contains comprehensive guidance on the operation of unmanned aircraft systems in UK airspace and is available for download at from their web site at <http://www.caa.co.uk>