

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION

COMMUNIQUE

OPERATION OF DRONES

The public is hereby informed that the regulations 91,91A,91B, or 91C of the Civil Aviation Regulations 2007 will be revoked and replaced by the Civil Aviation (Unmanned Aircraft System) Regulations 2024 which will become effective as from **01 January 2025**.

The objective of the new regulations is to provide a framework for the safe and responsible operation of unmanned aircrafts in various situations.

The public is hereby informed that any permission granted under regulations 91,91A,91B, or 91C of the Civil Aviation Regulations 2007 shall remain valid until its expiry or 12 months from the coming into operation of the new regulations, whichever comes first.

It is brought to the notice of the public that the Civil Aviation (Unmanned Aircraft System) Regulations 2024 provides for the following.

Registration of Drones and Drone Operators

All Unmanned Aircraft Systems, commonly known as drones, equipped with a camera or any data capturing devices irrespective of whether they will be used for leisure/recreational or personal use will have to be registered with the Department of Civil Aviation.

The registration will also include registering the owner as well as the operator of the drone.

All existing operators and owners of a drone, shall ensure that prior to the coming into effect of the new regulations, their drone is duly registered with the Department. Each drone will be issued with a unique registration number.

Drones classified as toys, not fitted with a camera or any data-capturing device and meant for leisure, recreational, or personal use operated indoors or on private premises, will not be subject to these Regulations.

Operation of Drones

The new Regulations provide for operation of drones in the 3 categories:

1. ***Open Category*** – this is a category where, in the opinion of the Authority, the drone operation presents low risks to third parties;
2. ***Specific Category*** – this is a category where, in the opinion of the Authority, the drone operation presents risks to third parties that are high but not as high as risks posed by an aircraft system having a pilot on board;
3. ***Certified Category*** – this is a category where, in the opinion of the Authority, the drone operation presents risks to third parties that are as high as risks posed by an aircraft system having a pilot on board.

A certificate of competency is required to operate in each of the three categories specified above.

Light UAS Operator Certificate (LUC)

An operator intending to operate a drone in one or more of the above categories may apply for a Light UAS Operator Certificate (LUC)

Programming of Drones

All drones shall be programmed such that their entry in restricted or prohibited areas is controlled.

Distributors, importers or sellers of UAS products

Any person distributing, importing or selling a UAS product in the course of a business shall ensure that its name, postal address and website are clearly specified on the UAS product, its packaging or its accompanying literature. **Sellers**

All sellers shall maintain records for the equipment being sold and details of the purchaser.

Leisure and Recreational Purposes

Drone operators who will use their drone solely for recreational and leisure purposes, do not require an authorisation from the Authority. However, the use of the drone for any other purpose would require an authorisation from the Authority.

Direct Remote Identification

All drones shall be equipped with a direct remote identification add-on that will transmit relevant data, including the drone registration number, the geographical position of the drone and the route course of the drone, in real time.

Application forms

All application forms (for registration and drone operation) can be downloaded from our website. The duly filled form should be submitted to the Department of Civil Aviation by email, fax or post.

The Department of Civil Aviation has published the Mauritius Civil Aviation Requirements (MCAR) to provide clarification, guidance, and acceptable means of compliance on how to register an unmanned aircraft system (drone), a drone operator or a drone owner and how to obtain authorisation to operate a drone in the open, specific, and certified categories.

A copy of the Civil Aviation (Unmanned Aircraft System) Regulation 2024 and Mauritius Civil Aviation Requirement Unmanned Aircraft System (MCAR-UAS) will be published on our website: <https://civil-aviation.govmu.org/Pages/DRONE/Drone-Requirement.aspx>

Offence

Please note that failure to comply with the new regulations will constitute an offence. Any person who contravenes these regulations shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding one million rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months.