

Quick Start Guide

to the regulations for drone flying

www.britishdroneflyers.org



THE LAW HAS CHANGED

- ⦿ The regulations for operating unmanned aircraft (drones) changed recently and full details can be found in CAP 722. BMFA members can choose to operate under the Open Category of CAP 722 or the BMFA's 'Article 16 Authorisation' issued by the CAA.
- ⦿ The BMFA 'Authorisation' defines different and more flexible operating requirements for members operating aircraft up to 25Kg. To benefit from the Authorisation, you must familiarise yourself with the requirements.
- ⦿ For full details, please see <https://rcc.bmfa.uk/article-16>.



HOW HIGH CAN I FLY?

- ⦿ The height limit for all multi-rotor drones is 400ft (120m) above the terrain in both CAP 722 and the BMFA's Authorisation.
- ⦿ BMFA members may operate up to 1000ft with FPV aircraft (excluding multi-rotors) which weigh less than 3.5 Kg provided they are manually piloted (not flown using autonomous or automatic flight capability) and flown in accordance with BMFA published guidance.



REGISTERED & COMPETENT

It is a legal requirement for most drone flyers to register as an Operator with the CAA (if 18 or over) and have evidence of their competency (regardless of age) before they fly.

- You can register as an Operator through the BMFA.
- ⦿ To fly within the BMFA's Authorisation - the BMFA or CAA online test provides evidence of competency.
 - ⦿ To fly a drone weighing more than 250g within CAP 722, you must obtain a CAA Flyer I.D. by taking the CAA online test.
 - ⦿ A CAA Operator I.D. number must be displayed on (or be easily accessible within) the aircraft.



LINE OF SIGHT

- ⦿ You must operate your aircraft within visual line of sight (VLOS).
- ⦿ Flying a drone whilst primarily viewing the flight on a device screen is regarded as flying 'First Person View' (FPV).
- ⦿ If flying using FPV, you must have a competent observer next to you who maintains VLOS with your aircraft. Special rules apply to FPV drone racing within a 'sterile area'.



FLY SAFELY

You must not endanger the safety of any uninvolved person or any vessel, vehicle or structure not under your control when you fly your unmanned aircraft.

- Under the BMFA's Authorisation**, for aircraft under 7.5kg, do not fly within
- ⦿ 30m of uninvolved people
 - ⦿ 30m horizontal distance from an assembly of people
- The distance can be reduced to 15m for take-off and landing in some circumstances.
- For aircraft over 7.5kg (or any aircraft operated by FPV) do not fly within
- ⦿ 30m of uninvolved people
 - ⦿ 50m horizontal distance from an assembly of people
- Flying within 'built up areas' is only permitted subject to the conditions outlined in our guidance.



MANNED AIRCRAFT

- ⦿ You must do everything possible to avoid conflict with any manned aircraft.
- ⦿ It is illegal to fly a drone of any weight within in a Flight Restriction Zone (FRZ) around an airport/airfield without permission (see our guidance for details).
- ⦿ To ensure that you are not operating in an FRZ, please see <https://dronesafe.uk/restrictions/>.
- ⦿ Endangering the safety of a manned aircraft could result in a five-year prison sentence.



YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE

- ⦿ You are legally responsible for ensuring that your flights are conducted safely. It is essential that you are aware of the laws which apply.
- ⦿ Our Authorisation covers flying for sport, recreation, education and demonstration. It excludes any flying for commercial purposes.
- ⦿ For further details of Operator and Remote Pilot responsibilities, please refer to our full guidance.
- ⦿ Failure to operate lawfully could result in criminal prosecution.



MINIMUM AGE

- ⦿ There is no minimum age for a remote pilot, but they must have evidence of competency if operating without the supervision of a competent remote pilot.
- ⦿ Under 18's will need someone to act as their Operator and be registered with the CAA.



ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- Our Authorisation also includes special arrangements for:
- ⦿ FPV Drone Racing
 - ⦿ Visiting flyers/competitors from overseas
 - ⦿ Display flying
- For further details, please see the full guidance.



IF THINGS GO WRONG

- The law requires the reporting of certain occurrences:
- ⦿ Serious accidents and incidents to the AAIB
 - ⦿ Serious incidents and a range of other occurrences (including breaches of the terms of our Authorisation) to the CAA.
- The BMFA has made this process as easy as possible:
<https://reporting.bmfa.uk/>



AIRCRAFT LESS THAN 250G

- ⦿ Even if your aircraft is under 250g you still need to register as an Operator if your drone has a camera fitted. Evidence of competency is required to operate within the BMFA's Authorisation.
- ⦿ Alternatively, you may operate within the Open Category requirements - defined in CAP 722 - for aircraft of less than 250g.



THE BMFA

The BMFA has been working hard for UK model aircraft and drone flyers since 1922. Our unbeatable membership benefits include:

- ⦿ Insurance – a class leading package including £25 million liability cover and £35K personal accident cover.
- ⦿ CAA Operator Registration - made easy as part of our membership process.
- ⦿ The British Drone Flyers Newsletter emailed out to you 6 times a year and access to download the BMFA NEWS – for details of everything happening in our wider unmanned aircraft community
- ⦿ Achievement Scheme – dedicated to raising flying standards and safety whilst making learning fun.
- ⦿ Access to competition – membership provides access to local, national, and international model flying contests.
- ⦿ Guidance – we publish an extensive range of guidance material to help members have fun, fly safely, and remain within the law.
- ⦿ Assistance – our experienced staff are there to help, advise and support whenever required.
- ⦿ Representation - we represent the model/drone flying community at the highest levels nationally and internationally.

All this and much more for less than 11p a day!

www.bmfa.org

For details of the full requirements, please visit <https://rcc.bmfa.uk/article-16>