

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for public sensitization on Safe and Legal Use of Drones

1. Introduction

Drones, also known as Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), are widely used for photography, videography, surveying, agriculture, mapping, recreation, and other lawful purposes. While drones provide significant benefits, unsafe or unauthorized operations can pose serious risks to aviation safety, public safety, privacy, and national security.

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is issued to create awareness among citizens, drone owners, and remote pilots regarding the safe, legal, and responsible use of drones in India, in accordance with the Drone Rules, 2021, and subsequent amendments and advisories issued by the Government of India.

2. Scope

This SOP covers:

- Applicable regulations
- Basic guidelines on how to safely fly a drone
- Legal requirements for drone ownership and operation
- Consequences of illegal or unsafe drone operations
- Common violations observed during drone usage

This SOP is meant only for public awareness and does not replace statutory rules or official instructions issued by competent authorities.

3. Applicable Regulations

Drone operations in India are governed by the following regulations:

| S. No. | Activity | Applicable Regulations |
|---------------|--|--|
| 1 | Drone operations in civil airspace | Drone Rules, 2021 and Drone (Amendment) Rules, 2022 |
| 2 | Type certification of drones | Drone Rules, 2021; Certification Scheme for Drones, 2022 |
| 3 | Registration (UIN) | Part IV of Drone Rules, 2021 |
| 4 | Operation of drones | Part V of Drone Rules, 2021 |
| 5 | Remote Pilot Certificate (RPC) | Part VI of Drone Rules, 2021, Drone Training Circular 02 of 2023 |
| 6 | RPTOs (Remote pilot training organization) | Part VI of Drone Rules, 2021 |
| 7 | Insurance | Part X of Drone Rules, 2021 |

The aforementioned regulations are available on DGCA Website [Home | Directorate General of Civil Aviation | Government of India](#). The website also provides information on all registered Drones and Remote Pilots, Type Certified Drones under respective tabs of UINs, Remote Pilots and UAS Models.

4. Basic Guidelines on how to safely fly a drone

Drone users must follow these basic safety guidelines:

- Only DGCA-certified Remote Pilots are allowed to operate drones, except Nano and Micro drones used for non-commercial purposes.
- Always operate drones strictly in accordance with Drone Rules, 2021, DGCA advisories, and training circulars.
- Check the airspace classification (Green / Yellow / Red Zone) on the Digital Sky Platform before flying.
- Obtain necessary permissions before flying in Yellow or Red Zones.

Yellow zone: drone.asmchq@AAI.AERO

Red zone: sdit.div-moca@gov.in

- Maintain a safe distance from people, buildings, vehicles, and animals.
- Conduct a pre-flight inspection to ensure the drone is in good working condition.
- Avoid flying in bad weather, strong winds, rain, or poor visibility.
- Respect privacy, do not capture images or videos of individuals or private property without consent.
- Never fly near airports, military installations, government buildings, or sensitive locations without authorization.

5. Legal requirements for drone ownership and operation

For lawful drone usage, the following must be ensured:

| S. No. | Requirement | Details |
|--------|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | Type Certification | Drone must be type-certified by DGCA |
| 2 | Registration (UIN) | Drone must be registered on eGCA |
| 3 | Remote Pilot Certificate | Valid RPC for the drone's category and weight class |
| 4 | Insurance | Valid third-party insurance |
| 5 | Flying Permission | Green Zone → No Permission Required |
| | | Yellow Zone → concern ATC Permission |
| | | Red Zone → MoCA |

6. Consequences of Illegal or unsafe drone operations

Unauthorized, unsafe, or illegal drone usage may lead to:

- Penalties under Rule 50 of Drone Rules, 2021
- Seizure of the drone and associated equipment
- Suspension or cancellation of Remote Pilot Certificate or permissions under Rule 53
- Registration of FIR and legal action under applicable laws
- Restriction or permanent ban on future drone operations

7. Common violations observed during drone usage

Use of non-type certified or unregistered drones

- Use of illegally imported or foreign-manufactured drones
- Using drones registered for recreational or R&D purposes for commercial activities
- Operating drones of a higher weight/category than permitted under the pilot's certificate
- Conducting unauthorized BVLOS operations
- Flying in Red or Yellow Zones without permission
- Conducting R&D flights outside approved or controlled areas
- Operating drones without third-party insurance

8. Summary

<500 kg & Civil

| | Nano <250 g | Micro >250 g < 2kg | Small >2 to <25 kg | Medium >25 < 150 kg | Large >150 kg [<500kg] |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Drone Registration | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Type Certification | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Remote Pilot Certificate | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Permission in Green Zone | | | | | |
| Permission in Yellow Zone | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Permission in Red Zone | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| R&D, Education, Testing | | | | | |
| Insurance | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
