

AV-22011/2/2020-SDnIT-MoCA
Government of India
Ministry of Civil Aviation
SD&IT Division

Rajiv Gandhi Bhavan, New Delhi
02 May 2020

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Conditional exemption to Government entities for COVID-19 related RPAS operations

Whereas the Government of India is cognizant of the grave threat to life due to the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19);

And whereas, the Government of India considers that the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft System ("RPAS", commonly known as 'drones') can aid Government entities in addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19;

And whereas the rules and regulations related to operation of Remotely Piloted Aircraft ("RPA") are covered under Rule 15A of Aircraft Rules, 1937 and Civil Aviation Requirements ("CAR") Section 3 Series X Part I dated 27.8.2018 issued by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Now, therefore, the Government of India, in exercise of the powers conferred under Rule 160 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937, lays down a simplified procedure for grant of conditional exemption ("Conditional Exemption") to Government entities from the provisions of the above mentioned Rule and CAR, subject to the terms and conditions mentioned hereinafter.

The Conditional Exemption may be sought by an entity under the Union Government, State Government, District Administration or Government Institutions ("Authorised Entity") by submitting an online application at DGCA's Digital Sky Platform (<https://digitalsky.dgca.gov.in/>).

The terms and conditions of the Conditional Exemption, if granted, shall be as follows:

1. The Conditional Exemption shall be limited to RPA deployed by an Authorised Entity for aerial surveillance, aerial photography and public announcements related to COVID-19. For other RPA activities, even if related to COVID-19 operations, permission shall be sought separately from Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and DGCA as per normal procedure.
2. The Conditional Exemption shall be limited to battery-operated rotary-wing RPA only. Use of any other type of RPA, including but not limited to, fixed-wing RPA and autonomous RPA etc. is strictly prohibited.
3. The responsibility of safe operation of the RPA shall rest entirely with the Authorised Entity. Each RPA operation shall be carried out under the overall supervision and control of the Authorised Entity. The RPA shall, at no time, pose a risk to life, property or any other manned/ unmanned aircraft.
4. The Authorised Entity may operate its own RPA or engage a third-party RPA service provider ("RSP") to provide and/or operate the RPA. The security verification and

capability assessment of the RSP and the RSP's RPA operators shall be the sole responsibility of the Authorised Entity and should be completed before operating the RPA.

5. The Authorised Entity shall be responsible for the custody, security and access control of the RPA at all times and shall be responsible for any third-party liability in case of any damage caused by the RPA.
6. Details of every RPA flight shall be uploaded on DGCA's Digital Sky Platform within seven days of undertaking the flight. Any incident or accident related to any RPA operation shall be immediately reported to MoCA and DGCA through the Digital Sky Platform.
7. The RPA and its operation shall comply with the following conditions:
 - a) The RPA shall have a Unique Identification Number (UIN) and/or Drone Acknowledgement Number (DAN) issued by DGCA;
 - b) The RPA shall not exceed a total all-up weight of 25 kg;
 - c) The RPA shall be equipped with an automatic return-to-home feature in case of any loss of the command-and-control link;
 - d) The operation shall be restricted to a height of 200 feet Above Ground Limit (AGL);
 - e) The RPA shall be operated within visual line of sight (VLOS) at all times;
 - f) The RPA shall be operated while maintaining safe distance from people, buildings, vehicles and property at all times;
 - g) The RPA shall not pick, drop, spray or discharge any substance;
 - h) The RPA operation shall be restricted to a period between local sunrise and local sunset.
 - i) RPA operation shall be avoided during adverse weather conditions, including but not limited to, heavy winds, rain, dust storms, low visibility etc.;
 - j) The operator shall be adept in handling the RPA at all stages of flight especially emergency recovery actions in case of any component failure;
 - k) All RPA flights shall be immediately terminated when the battery reserve is reduced to 15 minutes; and
 - l) No person shall act as a remote pilot for more than one RPA operation at any time.
8. No RPA operation shall be undertaken in the following geographical areas:
 - a) Within a distance of 5 km from the perimeter of airports at Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad;
 - b) Within a distance of 3 km from the perimeter of any civil, private or defence airports, other than those mentioned in Para (a) above;
 - c) Within permanent or temporary Prohibited, Restricted and Danger Areas including Temporary Reserved Airspace (TRA), and Temporarily Segregated Areas (TSA), as notified in the Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP);
 - d) Within 25km from international border which includes Line of Control (LoC), Line of Actual Control (LAC) and Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL);
 - e) Beyond 500 m (horizontal) into sea from coast line provided the location of ground station is on fixed platform over land;
 - f) Within 3 km from perimeter of military installations/ facilities/ where military activities/ exercises are being carried out unless clearance is obtained from the local military installation/facility;
 - g) Within 5 km radius from Vijay Chowk in Delhi. This is subject to additional conditions/ restrictions imposed by local law enforcement agencies/ authorities.

- h) Within 3 km radius from State Secretariat Complex in State Capitals;
- i) Within 2 km from perimeter of strategic locations/ vital installations notified by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) unless clearance is obtained from MHA;
- j) From a mobile platform such as a moving vehicle, ship or aircraft; and
- k) Over eco-sensitive zones around National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries notified by Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change without prior permission.

9. The provisions of this Public Notice shall remain in force until further orders.
10. The Government of India reserves the right to modify, withdraw or extend the provisions of this Public Notice, without providing any reasons whatsoever.
11. Any violation of the provisions of this Public Notice shall make the Conditional Exemption null and void; and shall lead to penal action as per applicable law.
12. This issues with the approval of the Competent Authority.



(Amber Dubey)
Joint Secretary to the Government of India

Copy to:

1. All Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India.
2. Chief Secretaries/ Administrators of all States/ Union Territories
3. DGPs/ Heads of Police of all States/ Union Territories
4. Joint Secretary (Internal Security), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), New Delhi
5. Joint Director, Intelligence Bureau (Shri. Janardan Singh), New Delhi
6. Director, G-Wing, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi
7. DG, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), New Delhi
8. DG, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), New Delhi
9. Chairman, Airports Authority of India (AAI), New Delhi
10. PS to HMoSCA (IC), Ministry of Civil Aviation, New Delhi
11. Sr. PPS to Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, New Delhi
12. National Informatics Centre (NIC) team, Rajiv Gandhi Bhavan, New Delhi
13. Digital Sky Platform
