

Guidelines for Drone Operations

Why in news?

\n\n

Directorate General of Civil Aviation has recently published the final guidelines for operating drones by ordinary citizens.

\n\n

What are drones?

\n\n

\n

- Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is the civil aviation regulator in the country.

\n

- As defined by DGCA, drones are remotely piloted aircraft (RPA).

\n

- RPA is an unmanned aircraft piloted from a remote pilot station.

\n

- The RPA, its associated remote pilot station(s), command and control links and any other components forms a Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS).

\n

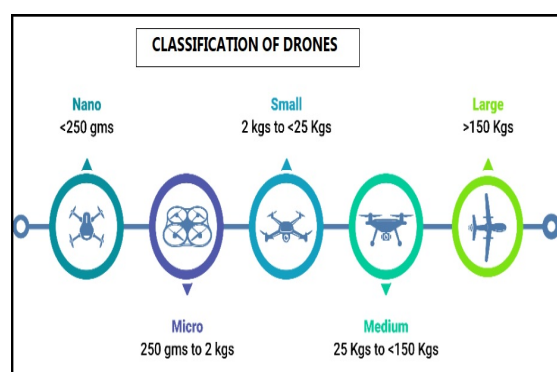
- The guidelines for operating them come into effect on December 1, 2018.

\n

- It is the date from when civilian use of drones becomes legal in India.

\n

\n\n



\n\n

What are the highlights?

\n\n

\n

- **Drone types** - DGCA has identified multiple categories of drones, broadly classified as:

\n

\n\n

\n

1. Nano (weighing up to 250 g)
2. Micro (more than 250 g but less than 2 kg)
3. Small and above (weighing 2 kg or more)

\n

\n\n

\n

- **Before flying** - Every drone bigger than Nano must obtain a unique identification number (UIN) from the aviation regulator.
- This must be displayed on the aircraft, similar to the registration number of vehicles.
- A UIN will be issued once, against a fee of Rs 1,000.
- It will not be issued to a foreign citizen or entity.
- Users of bigger drones will be required to obtain a Unique Air Operator's Permit (UAOP).
- This is similar to a driver's licence for normal vehicles.
- The permit will cost Rs 25,000 and will be valid for five years, and renewals will cost Rs 10,000.
- The UIN and UAOP can be obtained from the online platform Digital Sky that will go live on December 1.
- The permits will reportedly be issued in less than a week.
- **Flying conditions** - All drones, other than the Nano ones, must meet mandatory equipment requirements.

\n

- These include GPS, anti-collision light, ID plate, radio-frequency identification (RFID) and SIM facilities.
\n
- Software that ensures 'no-permission, no-takeoff', among other features, is must.
\n
- Before flying a Small or bigger drone, an operator has to file a flight plan, and inform the local police.
\n
- This is for the machine to reach a height of 400 ft or more, and use both controlled and uncontrolled airspace.
\n
- Micro drones will be required to submit a flight plan only if using controlled airspace.
\n
- The operator must, however, inform the local police in all cases.
\n
- Many drones used for amateur photography fall in this category.
\n
- These aircraft will need a UIN but no UAOP, and will be allowed to climb only to a height of 200 ft.
\n
- Nano drones will be able to operate freely, without any registration or permit.
\n
- But their operations will be restricted to 50 ft above the ground.
\n
- It is also limited to uncontrolled airspaces and enclosed premises.
\n
- **Training** - All those requiring a UAOP must undertake a five-day training programme.
\n
- This will expose them to regulations, basic principles of flight, and air traffic control procedures.
\n
- They will also be taught on weather and meteorology, emergency identification and handling, etc.
\n
- These operators will also have to take written tests and flight simulator tests before they are issued permits.
\n
- **Time** - All categories of drones must be flown in the visual line of sight, and only during daytime.
\n

- But photography using drones is allowed in well-lit enclosed premises.
\n
- It would still be mandatory to inform the local police before flying.
\n
- **No-fly zones** - DGCA has listed 12 categories of “no-drone zones”.
\n
- These include the area up to 5 km from the perimeters of the high-traffic airports of Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.
\n
- For other airports, the no-drone zone extends up to 3 km.
\n
- Drones cannot fly closer than 25 km of international borders, including the Line of Control and Line of Actual Control.
\n
- The area within a 5-km radius of New Delhi’s Vijay Chowk is a no-drone zone.
\n
- This, however, is subject to any additional conditions/restrictions of local law enforcement agencies/authorities for security reasons.
\n
- The Ministry of Home Affairs can notify the perimeter of strategic locations and vital installations.
\n
- A drone cannot be flown within 2 km from the perimeter of such areas, unless cleared by the Ministry.
\n
- A drone can also not be flown
\n

\n\n

\n

- i. within a 3 km radius of secretariat complexes in state capitals
\n
- ii. from a mobile platform such as a moving vehicle, ship or aircraft
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express

\n



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering