UAV Regulation and testing in New Zealand

In recent years, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have seen rapid technological advancements. Kiwi ingenuity in the UAV industry has contributed to these technological advances. This developing industry is opening up significant business opportunities, for New Zealand and international companies.

While New Zealand wants this industry to grow, we recognise that growth brings potential safety risks. Therefore, we developed a flexible, innovative and world leading regulatory framework.

New rules

New Civil Aviation rules came into force on 1 August 2015 to regulate the use of UAVs for recreational and commercial purposes in New Zealand. These new rules are relatively flexible, allowing for the growth of fast developing technology — while retaining safety as a key priority. The rules are risk-based, which means they consider the safety risks of an operation, rather than the purpose of the operation (e.g. recreational or commercial use).

The two rule parts that relate to UAVs are:

- **Part 101 Gyrogliders and Parasails, Unmanned Aircraft (including Balloons), Kites, and Rockets - Operating Rules**
- **Part 102 Unmanned Aircraft Operator Certification.**

These rules mean that many commercial and recreational operations will be able to fly in New Zealand without needing approval from the New Zealand Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as they are undertaking low risk activities. **Part 101** sets out the operating requirements that are necessary for the CAA to be satisfied that safety risks are minimal, such as flying only during the day, below 120 metres, keeping more than 4 kilometres from an aerodrome, and avoiding flying over people and property without consent.

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**Rule Part 101 applies...**

- **Under 25kg**
  - If your aircraft weighs less than 25kg
- **0-15m**
  - If your aircraft weighs between 0 – 15kg
  - No approval / authorisation needed
- **15-25m**
  - If your aircraft weighs between 15 – 25kg
  - Approval is needed from a CAA-approved organisation (purchase only, Model Flying New Zealand)
- **And...**
  - If you want to fly within Rule Part 101 restrictions
    - eg. fly during the day, below 400ft (120 metres)

**Want to fly outside Rule Part 101 restrictions?**

- **Outside Part 101**
  - If you want to operate an unmanned aircraft outside one or more Rule Part 101 restrictions – eg. at night, above 400ft (120 metres), or if your aircraft weighs more than 25 kg

**Apply**

- Apply to the CAA for Unmanned Aircraft Operator Certification (Rule Part 102).
- You’ll find guidance on how to do this on the CAA website.

**Manage risks**

- Your application will need to include a plan showing how you will manage the risks of your operation.

See www.caa.govt.nz or www.airlaw.co.nz for all Rule Part 101 restrictions. You’ll need to get certification under Rule Part 102.
Those who wish to operate beyond what is allowed under Part 101 have the option to apply to the CAA for certification under **Part 102**. This means that operators using aircraft for innovative applications such as photography, precision agriculture and search and rescue are able to have their operation assessed by the CAA to ensure the operation is safe.

More detailed information on Part 101 and Part 102 and the certification process can be found on the CAA website at:


**What can you do with a UAV in New Zealand?**

The flexibility of the new rules means that there are virtually no limitations on the types of operation that can be carried out. However, operators will need to satisfy the CAA that safety risks have been identified and mitigated to a manageable level. Applications for certification will be considered by the CAA on a case-by-case basis.

**Example – Yamaha RMAX**

The Yamaha RMAX was the first UAV of its type in New Zealand to secure Part 102 certification for aerial spraying. The UAV has a payload of 26 kilograms and weighs 99 kilograms. The RMAX is a serious piece of equipment that could do damage. That is why, under New Zealand’s new rules, a UAV of this weight and size requires Part 102 certification for the safety of operators and surrounding people and infrastructure.

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**Need more information on the UAV regulatory structure in New Zealand?**

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