

FIJI AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR



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AIC 14/22

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OPS/ATC

This AIC replaces AIC 08/19, which is hereby cancelled.

OPERATION OF REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS **(a.k.a RPAS, UA or Drones)**

1 Background

- 1.1 Any aircraft intended to be flown without a pilot on board is referred to in the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Doc 7300), signed at Chicago on 7 December 1944 and amended by the ICAO Assembly as a “pilotless aircraft”. Today these aircraft are also referred to as “unmanned”.
- 1.2 Remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) or Unmanned aircraft (UA) include a broad spectrum from meteorological balloons that fly freely to highly complex aircraft piloted from remote locations by licensed aviation professionals. RPAS are creating a new industry with large economic potential, offering a vast range of capabilities and sophistication and their associated technologies, designs, and operating concepts are evolving rapidly.
- 1.3 It is within this context that we are being challenged with the safe and efficient integration of RPAS into environments shared by a highly regulated and well-established manned aircraft industry.

2 Objective

- 2.1 The objective of this AIC is to detail the Authority’s requirements, conditions and limitations for the operation of RPAS/UA in Fiji.

3 Policy

- 3.1 Air Navigation Regulation 82 relates to the operation of pilotless aircraft and prohibits the operation of such aircraft except under authorisation in writing of the Authority and in accordance with such conditions as may be specified in the authorisation.
- 3.2 To enable the issue of Authorisations by the Authority and facilitate safe operation of these aircraft in the Fiji civil aviation system, specific procedures are required to be followed by the operators.

- 3.3 Operations for hire and reward such as, banner-towing, advertising, photography, aerial survey, marine survey, agriculture survey, fish spotting, aerial dispersion of bio-chemicals for agriculture, mosquito-programs etc., are to be conducted in appropriately certificated and operated unmanned aircraft and only with a written authorisation from the Authority.
- 3.4 Recreational RPAS; owners must register their drones with the Authority using CAAF form OP-137.
- 3.5 Commercial RPAS; operators must apply for an Authorisation using the CAAF form OP-138. A written authorisation must be received from the Authority prior to the conduct of flights. Furthermore, such RPAS must meet internationally recognised standards, and the persons or organisations that construct, maintain, and operate them must be qualified or certificated in a manner acceptable to the Authority.
- 3.6 The principle employed by the Authority in granting authorisations is that the RPAS operation will not present any undue hazard to other airspace users, or to persons or property.
- 3.7 The Authority does not certify RPAS or the RPAS operators, but will accept certification from internationally recognized bodies set up to perform these functions. The following organisations have been deemed to be acceptable: -
 - FAA (UAVS Division certification)
 - CASA
 - NZ CAA
 - UK CAA
 - EASA, and
 - any other internationally recognized body assessed as acceptable by the Authority.

4 Definitions

- 4.1 For the purpose of this AIC, unmanned aircraft (UA) has the equivalent meaning to Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS).

“Authority” means the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji.

“Acceptable” means acceptable to the Authority.

“Kg” means kilograms

“Unmanned Aircraft” are classified as follows:-

4.2 Weight classes

4.2.1 RPAS are separated into the following weight classes:

- a) **very small:** gross weight of less than 2 kg
- b) **small:** gross weight of at least 2 kg and less than 7 kg
- c) **medium:** gross weight of at least 7 kg and less than or equal to 25 kg (or, for airships, an envelope of 100 m³ or less)
- d) **large:** gross weight greater than 25 kg (or, for airships, more than a 100 m³ envelope).

4.2.2 And into operating capabilities: -

- Line of Sight
- Beyond Visual Line of Sight

5 Airworthiness Standards – Applicable to Medium and Large RPAS Only.

- 5.2 Unmanned aircraft will not be accepted on to the Fiji register unless they have been designed, constructed, and tested to acceptable design standards. The following standards are considered acceptable, EASA-E.Y013-01 - Airworthiness Certification of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and any other international standard acceptable to the Authority.
- 5.3 The unmanned aircraft type referred to in 5.1 must also have a proven acceptable safety record.
- 5.4 Previously operated unmanned aircraft will not be accepted unless they have been owned, since new, by the person who is importing them. In this case, a change of ownership may not be accepted until the aircraft has been in Fiji for twelve months unless otherwise approved by the Authority.
- 5.5 Construction and Certification of any unmanned aircraft in this chapter must be under the auspices of one of the organizations specified in paragraph 3.7, and in compliance with the appropriate requirements specified in paragraph 5.1.
- 5.6 Continuing maintenance of the aircraft must be in compliance with the instructions in the aircraft flight manual.
- 5.7 When the Authority is satisfied that the above requirements have been met, the unmanned aircraft will be issued with a permit to operate, endorsed with the appropriate limitations.
- 5.8 Renewal of permits to fly will normally be for a period of 12 months and may be extended after 2 years of an incident free operation in Fiji.

6 Application for The Issue of Authorisations

6.2 An applicant for the issue of an Authorisation to operate an RPAS commercially must submit the following to the Authority: -

For RPAS below 2kg:

- (a) A sub 2K Basic Drone Course certification or equivalent
- (b) Letter of Intent
- (c) Liability and Third-Party Insurance Cover from a recognised Insurance broker that has dealt with Unmanned Aircraft Operations Insurance.

For RPAS above 2kg, additional documentation listed below must also be submitted:

- (d) Remote Pilot License or Evidence to satisfy the Authority of the competence of the person nominated to carry out test flights.

For RPAS above 7kg net weight (excluding payload):

- (e) Complete records to demonstrate that the aircraft has been maintained as required.
- (f) An unmanned aircraft flight manual appropriate to the original type certification.
- (g) Satisfactory ground and flight test reports to a format previously agreed by the Authority.
- (h) A maintenance inspection programme. This must include details of any special techniques specified by the manufacturer, and details of each mandatory replacement or inspection interval.
- (i) Maintenance instructions regarding disassembly, transport, storage, and reassembly to airworthy condition where major components are designed to be removed for this purpose.
- (j) Evidence to satisfy the Authority of the competence of the person nominated to maintain the aircraft.
- (k) A Company Operations Manual, including a hazard identification and risk assessment system program.
- (l) Liability and Third-Party Insurance Cover from a recognised Insurance broker that has dealt with Unmanned Aircraft Operations Insurance.

6.3 Applicants for the renewal of an authorisation to fly must submit the evidence specified under paragraphs 6.1 (d) and (g).

6.4 An applicant for the issue of an authorisation to fly a light unmanned aircraft commercially must also submit the following to the Authority:

- (a) A completed CAAF RPAS Application Form OP 138.
- (b) A cover letter to outline the purpose for the unmanned aircraft
- (c) An UA/RPAS flight manual appropriate to the original type certification
- (d) An insurance cover for any foreseeable liability issues.

7 Conditions of Operations

- 7.2 UA must be operated in compliance with any conditions of operation imposed on the permit/authorisation to fly.
- 7.3 Unmanned operations may be authorised by the Authority to operate by day or at night in visual meteorological conditions with the device in visual sight at all times.
- 7.4 Except with the permission of the Authority, UA/RPAS must not be operated within: -
 - 5KM from any International aerodromes, or
 - 3KM from any Domestic aerodrome.
- 7.5 UA/RPAS shall not be operated over any sensitive and restricted areas: -
 - Government institutions,
 - Prisons,
 - Hospitals,
 - Police Stations,
 - Military Barracks,
 - Parliament grounds including the Presidential Home,
 - Airstrips and helicopter landing sites,
 - Moving vehicles
 - Sporting events and any other public areas including resorts and hotels except with prior authorisation from property management, CAAF and/or relevant authorities
- 7.6 They must be operated within visual line of sight unless approved otherwise
- 7.7 Unmanned aircraft may not be operated in any controlled airspace, flying training area, or low flying area, unless the operator has prior written permission from the Authority and the Air Traffic Control unit.

8 Pilot Qualifications and Training for Commercial RPAS/UAS Operators

8.2 A Very Small to Small Unmanned aircraft may only be flown in Fiji by:

- (a) the holder of the appropriate qualification, namely a Basic sub 2kg drone issued by one of the organizations specified in paragraph 3.7, who is operating in compliance with any limitations or conditions attached to that qualification, or
- (b) a person who is undergoing training at a RPAS Company operating under the authority of one of the organizations specified in paragraph 3.7, and who is operating in compliance with any rules, limitations, or conditions required by that organization, or the Authority, or

8.3 A Medium Unmanned Aircraft may be flown in Fiji by:

- (a) the holder of the Remote Pilots License (RePL) or equivalent appropriate qualification issued by one of the organizations specified in paragraph 3.7 and 6.1(d) who is operating in compliance with any limitations or conditions attached to that qualification, and

8.4 A Large Unmanned Aircraft may be flown in Fiji by:

- (a) the holder of the Remote Pilots License (RePL) or equivalent appropriate qualification issued by one of the organizations specified in paragraph 3.7 and 6.1 (d), who is operating in compliance with any limitations or conditions attached to that qualification, and
- (b) Hold a current Instrument Rating (Single or Multi)

9 Training

9.2 All training required 3.7 and 6.1 may be conducted by internationally recognized bodies and/or persons approved by the Authority.

9.3 The Authority may approve locally trained persons and/or organisations that have been accredited to conduct the required training as stipulated in paragraph 6.1.