

Quick Start Guide

to the regulations for model flying



THE LAW HAS CHANGED

- ⦿ BMFA members are permitted to operate aircraft up to 25Kg under our 'Article 16 Authorisation' issued by the CAA. This defines different and more flexible operating requirements to those detailed within UK Regulation (EU) 2019/947 which apply to non-members. To benefit from our Authorisation, you must familiarise yourself with the requirements and be a current BMFA member.
- ⦿ For full details, please see <https://rcc.bmfa.uk/article-16>.



LINE OF SIGHT

- ⦿ You must operate your aircraft within visual line of sight (VLOS).
- ⦿ If flying using first person view, you must have a competent observer next to you who maintains VLOS with your aircraft. Special rules apply to FPV drone racing within a 'sterile area'.
- ⦿ Free flight aircraft must not be deliberately flown beyond VLOS.



HOW HIGH CAN I FLY?

- ⦿ The height limit for all unmanned aircraft in UK Regulation (EU) 2019/947 is 400ft (120m) above the terrain.
- ⦿ BMFA members are authorised to operate above 400ft with aircraft (excluding multi-rotors) which weigh less than 7.5 Kg.
- ⦿ BMFA members are permitted to operate sailplanes over 7.5 Kg, (but not exceeding 14kg), up to 400ft above the pilot (rather than the terrain).
- ⦿ Model aircraft weighing more than 7.5 Kg must not be flown higher than 400ft without permission from the BMFA.



FLY SAFELY

- You must not endanger the safety of any uninvolved person or any vessel, vehicle or structure nor under your control when you fly your unmanned aircraft.
- For aircraft under 7.5kg, do not fly within
- ⦿ 30m of uninvolved people
 - ⦿ 30m horizontal distance from an assembly of people
- The distance can be reduced to 15m for take-off and landing in some circumstances.
- For aircraft over 7.5kg, do not fly within
- ⦿ 30m of uninvolved people
 - ⦿ 50m horizontal distance from an assembly of people
- Flying within 'built up areas' is only permitted subject to the conditions outlined in our guidance.



MANNED AIRCRAFT

- ⦿ You must do everything possible to avoid conflict with any manned aircraft.
- ⦿ It is illegal to fly any unmanned aircraft (other than a control line aircraft) within a Flight Restriction Zone (FRZ) around an airport/airfield without permission (see our guidance for details).
- ⦿ To ensure that you are not operating within an FRZ or airspace subject to restrictions, please check the UAS Restrictions Map at <https://nats-uk.ead-it.com/>.
- ⦿ Endangering the safety of a manned aircraft could result in a five-year prison sentence.



REGISTERED & COMPETENT

- ⦿ It is a legal requirement for most model flyers to register as an Operator with the CAA (if 18 or over) and have evidence of their competency (regardless of age).
- ⦿ **You can register as an Operator through the BMFA and existing BMFA Achievements are accepted as evidence of competency.**
- ⦿ Those without a recognised BMFA Achievement must pass the BMFA or CAA online test before they fly.
- ⦿ A CAA Operator I.D. number must be displayed on (or be easily accessible within) the aircraft.



YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE

- ⦿ You are legally responsible for ensuring that your flights are conducted safely. It is essential that you are aware of the laws which apply.
- ⦿ Our Authorisation covers flying for sport, recreation, education and demonstration. It excludes any flying for commercial purposes.
- ⦿ For further details of Operator and Remote Pilot responsibilities, please refer to our full guidance.
- ⦿ Failure to operate lawfully could result in criminal prosecution.



MINIMUM AGE

- ⦿ There is no minimum age for a remote pilot, but they must have evidence of competency if operating without the supervision of a competent remote pilot.
- ⦿ Under 18's will need someone to act as their Operator and be registered with the CAA.



AIRCRAFT LESS THAN 250G

- ⦿ Unless the aircraft is fitted with a camera, there is no requirement to register as an Operator, but evidence of competency is still required to operate within our Authorisation.
- ⦿ Alternatively, you may operate within the Open Category requirements - defined in CAP 722 - for aircraft of less than 250g.



IF THINGS GO WRONG

- The law requires the reporting of certain occurrences:
- ⦿ Serious accidents and incidents to the AAIB
 - ⦿ Serious incidents and a range of other occurrences (including breaches of the terms of our Authorisation) to the CAA.
 - ⦿ The BMFA has made this process as easy as possible: <https://reporting.bmfa.uk/>



ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- Our Authorisation also includes special arrangements for:
- ⦿ Trial flights for non-members
 - ⦿ Visiting flyers/competitors from overseas
 - ⦿ Display flying
 - ⦿ Permitting flights above 400ft with aircraft weighing more than 7.5Kg
- For further details, please see the full guidance.



THE BMFA

- The BMFA has been working hard for UK model aircraft and drone flyers since 1922. Our unbeatable membership benefits include:
- ⦿ Insurance – a class leading package including £25 million liability cover and £35K personal accident cover.
 - ⦿ CAA Operator Registration - made easy as part of our membership process.
 - ⦿ The BMFA NEWS – 60+ glossy pages of everything happening in our sport, delivered to your door 4 times per year.
 - ⦿ Achievement Scheme – dedicated to raising flying standards and safety whilst making learning fun.
 - ⦿ Access to competition – membership provides access to local, national, and international model flying contests.
 - ⦿ Guidance – we publish an extensive range of guidance material to help members have fun, fly safely, and remain within the law.
 - ⦿ Assistance – our experienced staff are there to help, advise and support whenever required.
 - ⦿ Representation - we represent the model/drone flying community at the highest levels nationally and internationally.

All this and much more for less than 12p a day!

www.bmfa.org



For details of the full requirements, please visit <https://rcc.bmfa.uk/article-16>