



Miscellaneous

No: 1233

Air Navigation Order 2016

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General Exemption E 4506

Small Unmanned Aircraft - Emergency Services Operations

- 1) The Civil Aviation Authority, in exercise of its powers under article 266 of the Air Navigation Order 2016 ('the Order'), exempts any member of the United Kingdom Emergency Services acting as the person in charge of a small unmanned aircraft¹ in support of a United Kingdom Police Force, from the requirements at articles 94(3), and 95 of the Order (see Note 1), subject to the conditions in paragraphs 2 to 4 below.
- 2) This exemption only applies to short term reactive situations aimed at preventing the immediate risk to human life, or during a major incident (see Note 2), where the observance of the restrictions in articles 94(3) and 95 of the Order would be likely to hinder this objective (see Note 3).
- 3) When employing this exemption the small unmanned aircraft must not be flown:
 - (a) other than by a remote pilot flying in accordance with a valid operational authorisation (permission or exemption) issued to a United Kingdom Police, Fire or Ambulance Service, as amended by this exemption;
 - (b) unless the decision to proceed has been made with reference to the Joint Decision Model (JDM) as prescribed under the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles;
 - (c) at a height exceeding 400 feet above the surface, or 100 feet above the highest obstacle in the vicinity of the small unmanned aircraft if this is higher;
 - (d) at a distance from the remote pilot station which exceeds the maximum control range of the aircraft, as stated in the operating manual of the emergency service under whose authority the person in charge is operating the aircraft;
 - (e) beyond a distance of 1000 metres from the remote pilot station without the explicit approval of the On-Scene Incident Commander (see Note 4);
 - (f) beyond a distance of 2000 metres from the remote pilot without the explicit approval of the Tactical Commander assigned to the incident (see Note 4).
- 4) Details on the execution of this exemption, and the individual procedures and training requirements, including the risk management process that will enable a reduction of separation distances, must be incorporated into the relevant operator's operations manual. This exemption may also be applied during training scenarios, provided that they cover the situations listed in paragraph 2 and they are being conducted within a controlled training environment.

¹ "Small unmanned aircraft" means any unmanned aircraft, other than a balloon or a kite, having a mass of not more than 20kg without its fuel but including any articles or equipment installed in or attached to the aircraft at the commencement of its flight (ANO 2016)

- 5) Details of all occasions where this exemption has been employed must specifically be logged by the operator. These details must be provided to the Civil Aviation Authority on request, or whenever the operational authorisation is renewed.
- 6) This exemption has effect from the date it is signed until varied, suspended or revoked.

P Kelleher

for the Civil Aviation Authority

31 July 2017

Notes:

- 1) Article 94(3) requires the person in charge of a small unmanned aircraft to ensure that direct unaided visual contact is maintained with the aircraft sufficient to monitor its flight path in relation to other aircraft, persons, vehicles, vessels and structures for the purpose of avoiding collisions.

Article 95 prevents the flight of a small unmanned surveillance aircraft under certain circumstances (minimum distances from congested areas, organised open-air assemblies and persons, vessels, vehicles or structures) except in accordance with a permission issued by the CAA.

- 2) Within the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles, a major incident is one which is beyond the scope of business-as-usual operations, and is likely to involve serious harm, damage, disruption or risk to human life or welfare, essential services, the environment or national security.
- 3) The intended purpose of this exemption is to allow a more flexible, but controlled, use of a small unmanned aircraft during an emergency operation where an increased risk to life becomes apparent at short notice (e.g. missing persons scenarios where it is clearly evident that swift action is required). It should be viewed in a similar fashion to that where Police, Fire or Ambulance vehicles are permitted to proceed through red traffic light signals, disregard 'keep left' signs, exceed speed limits etc. It is not intended to be used for longer term planned, or routine operations, where a more detailed permission or exemption would be required.
- 4) These requirements are made to introduce a series of 'check points' at which a positive decision is required before the flight is continued further. At each point, a full consideration of the aircraft's location, with respect to the potential risks in continuing further, is to be made and assessed against the overall benefits that may be achieved. Points to be considered may include, but are not limited to:
 - Weather conditions.
 - Airspace and/or proximity to aerodromes.
 - The potential for other manned aircraft to be operating in the same area.
 - Proximity to areas that would be particularly vulnerable if the small unmanned aircraft were to be lost (major/busy roads, railways, large gatherings of people etc).
 - Endurance of the aircraft (ie. how long it is able to keep flying).
 - The quality of the control link.
 - Operations beyond a distance of 3000 metres from the remote pilot should only be considered in extreme circumstances.