

RPAS Update

New rules have been in place since 1 August 2015 for Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (commonly called drones). There's good information on the CAA web site, but confusion has been generated by some media reports.

The CAA is receiving lots of enquiries every day, says Rex Kenny, CAA's Manager Special Flight Operations and Recreational Aviation.

"A lot of people just want some clarification on the rules before deciding if they want to, or even need to, apply for certification to fly under Part 102.

"We're trying to make it simpler for people to understand if they need to be certificated. There's a matrix on the CAA web site so that people can work through the list and see if they can fly under Part 101. A lot of operators don't need to certificate if they fit in the scope of Part 101 – even for commercial operations.

"If they can't operate within the confines of Part 101, that's when they need to consider certificating under Part 102.

"When it comes to that, there's also a sample exposition to help them understand what's required.

"Applying for certification under Part 102 isn't a 'get out of jail free' card," says Rex. "Safety is paramount for us, so anyone applying for certification must show how they are mitigating risk.

"For example, if they want to fly over houses, they may choose to fly an octocopter rather than a quadcopter, because having more engines provides greater security should one fail. They could also ensure their RPA has a recovery parachute to prevent it from free-falling to the ground if one or more of its engines fail.

"Also, it's important to realise that certification under Part 102 doesn't override any other legislation, such as council by-laws.

Yes, You Can Fly in the Park

You can fly in public spaces provided you meet the requirements of Part 101 and the owner (usually the local council or the Department of Conservation) allows that activity. You should avoid flying over people, but if required, you need their consent.

The Airshare™ web site has a handy guide to the councils who have policy on flying in parks, see www.airshare.co.nz, "My Flights – Property Owner Consent Information".

"It's similar for private property," says Rex. "You need the land owner's permission to fly over it."



Training

A number of organisations are now providing training specifically for RPAS. For operators not familiar with the aviation system, getting some formal training is highly recommended. See the guide on the Airshare™ web site, "News – Profile: UAV Training Providers".

For more information about RPAS, visit the CAA web site at www.caa.govt.nz/rpas. If you have further queries after looking at the web site, email: rpas@caa.govt.nz.

For information about reporting any RPAS safety related concerns, see "The Value of Reporting" on page 23. ■

