



Ministry of Civil Aviation

Draft National Drone Rules, 2021

Relevant to M&M - FES

14th July 2021

Introduction

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has unveiled the Draft Drone Rules, 2021 based on “trust, self-certification and non-intrusive monitoring”. Unmanned Aircraft System offer immense opportunities for economic growth and employment generation. There is need to regulate the drone related activities in a manner such that they do not pose any risk to safety or security of people and assets. The Central Government promulgated the **Unmanned Aircraft System Rules (UAS Rules), 2021**, which came into force on 12th March 2021. The new rules would replace the existing Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Rules, notified in March 2021.

Objective

To create a “**digital sky platform**” as a business-friendly single-window online system for procuring various approvals with minimal human interface.

Key Takeaways

- Drone Rules, 2021 will replace the UAS Rules 2021
- Approvals: abolish the need of various approvals including certificate of conformance, certificate of maintenance, import clearance, acceptance of existing drones, operator permit, authorisation of R&D organisation and student remote pilot licence
- Number of forms reduced from 25 to 6
- Fee reduced to nominal levels with no linkage with the size of the drone.
- Safety features like 'No permission - no take-off' (NPNT), real-time tracking beacon, geo-fencing, etc. to be notified in future. A six-month lead time will be provided for compliance.
- Digital sky platform shall be developed as a business-friendly single-window online system
- There will be minimal human interface on the digital sky platform and most permissions will be self-generated

- Interactive airspace map with green, yellow, and red zones will be displayed on the digital sky platform
- Yellow zone reduced from 45 km to 12 km from the airport perimeter
- No pilot licence required for micro drones (for non-commercial use), nano drones and for R&D organisations.
- No flight permission required up to 400 feet in green zones and up to 200 feet in the area between 8 and 12 km from the airport perimeter.
- No pilot licence required for micro drones (for non-commercial use), nano drone and for R&D organisations.
- No restriction on drone operations by foreign-owned companies registered in India.
- Import of drones and drone components to be regulated by DGFT.
- No security clearance required before any registration or licence issuance.
- No requirement of certificate of airworthiness, unique identification number, prior permission, and remote pilot licence for R&D entities.
- Coverage of drones under Drone Rules, 2021 increased from 300 kg to 500 kg. This will cover drone taxis also.
- All drone training and testing to be carried out by an authorised drone school. DGCA shall prescribe training requirements, oversee drone schools, and provide pilot licences online.
- Issuance of Certificate of Airworthiness delegated to Quality Council of India and certification entities authorised by it.
- Manufacturer may generate their drone's unique identification number on the digital sky platform through the self-certification route.
- Easier process prescribed for transfer and deregistration of drones.
- Standard operating procedures (SOP) and training procedure manuals (TPM) will be prescribed by DGCA on the digital sky platform for self-monitoring by users. No approvals required unless there is a significant departure from the prescribed procedures.
- Maximum penalty under Drone Rules, 2021 reduced to INR 1 lakh. This shall, however, not apply to penalties in respect of violation of other laws.
- Drone Corridors will be developed for cargo deliveries.
- **‘Drone Promotion Council’** to be set up to facilitate a business-friendly regulatory regime.



Conclusion

The decision to liberalize the drone policy even after the recent drone incidents in Jammu showcases the government's bold approach to promote the use of the drone and focus on the development of counter-drone technology to address the threat posed by rogue drones. The finalised Drone Rules 2021 will come into force on the date of its publication in the Official Gazette of India.