هيئة دبي للطيران المدني
DUBAI CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

DUBAI CIVIL AVIATION DIRECTIVE

RECREATIONAL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS

This Directive applies to any private or recreational Unmanned Aircraft operation within the Emirates of Dubai.

Reference Number
DCAA/DCAD/2025/00007

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1. Purpose

An Appropriate Authority – for aviation purposes - is any person or organization that has the legally delegated or invested authority, capacity, or power to perform a designated function and is responsible for the development, implementation and maintenance of the local civil aviation programme.

1. The Ruler of Dubai promulgated Law no 11 of 2020 (replacing Law no 19 of 2010), which prescribe the establishment of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority (DCAA), as a local authority (Appropriate Authority) having legal personality and legal capacity required to undertake all acts and dispositions that ensure the achievement of its objectives in accordance with Article 5 of Law no 11 of 2020
2. The DCAA is required, under Article 6 of Law no 11 of 2020, to establish regulatory policies and circulars for all Operators, Practitioners, and Regulated Airfreight Carriers in the Emirate.
3. In addition, The Ruler of Dubai promulgated Law No. (4) of 2020 Regulating Unmanned Aircraft in the Emirate of Dubai that assigns duties and powers to the DCAA with the objective to maintain Airspace Safety and security.
4. As the Appropriate Authority, the DCAA has implemented DCAD-RUA (Recreational Unmanned Aircraft Operations) for the rules governing the operation of Unmanned Aircraft for recreational purposes in the Emirate of Dubai.
5. This Directive represent the minimum requirements designed to achieve an acceptable level of safety, considering the various nature of operations within the Emirate of Dubai.

2. Documentation hierarchy

- Federal Law No. (20) of 1991 Issuing the Civil Aviation Law.
- Federal Law No. (4) of 1996 Establishing the General Civil Aviation Authority and its amendments.
- Federal Decree by Law No. (26) of 2022 Regulating the Civil Use of Drones and Activities Affiliated with it
- Law No. (11) of 2020 Concerning the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority.
- Law No. (7) of 2015 Concerning Airspace Safety and Security in the Emirate of Dubai.
- Law No. (4) of 2020 Regulating Unmanned Aircraft in the Emirate of Dubai
- UAE Civil Aviation Regulations.

- Dubai Civil Aviation Regulations (DCAR)
- Dubai Civil Aviation Directives
- ICAO Annexes.
- ICAO Documents.

3. References

1. Federal Law No. (20) of 1991 Issuing the Civil Aviation Law
2. Federal Decree by Law No. (26) of 2022 Regulating the Civil Use of Drones and Activities Affiliated with it
3. Law No. (7) of 2015 Concerning Airspace Safety and Security in the Emirate of Dubai
4. Law No. (4) of 2020 Regulating Unmanned Aircraft in the Emirate of Dubai
5. GCAA CAR-ASP part U-Space
6. DCAR-UAS Issue 3
7. European Union, European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)

4. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Definitions

1. The definitions, acronyms and abbreviations in GCAA CAR-DEF shall be considered when there is no conflicting definition in the specific DCAR publication.
2. Definitions shall be interpreted in the following order of precedence:
    i. The definitions in GCAA CAR-DEF
    ii. The definitions specific to the discipline (DCAR-RUA)
    iii. The definitions in DCAR-UAS
    iv. ICAO

5. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Applicability

1. This Directive applies to any private or recreational Unmanned Aircraft operation within the

Emirates of Dubai.

2. This Directive shall apply within the geographical zones established for the purposes of private or recreational UA operations by the Competent Authority within the Emirate of Dubai, or any other airspace where private or recreational UA operations have been authorized by the DCAA.
    i. A map representing the zones for recreational UAS activities are available on the DCAA website at DCAA - Dubai Drone Map

Exclusion of Toys

1. Unmanned aircraft classified as toys are excluded from this Directive.
2. By meeting SPECIFIC conditions, a flying object can be reasonably classified as a toy rather than a drone or commercial UAS. Specific regulations may vary by Emirate, so it's essential to cross-echeck with local Emirate aviation authorities.
3. To classify flying objects as toys rather than drones or commercial Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), criteria have been defined based on regulatory standards, functionality, and design. The following is a list of requirements or conditions:

#	Item	Description
1	Weight	Less than 250g (lightweight)
2	Size and Power	Small in size, with limited range and battery life (e.g., less than 10 minutes of flight time). Powered by low-capacity batteries or other low-energy sources.
3	Functionality	Limited operational capabilities: No advanced features like autonomous navigation, GPS, or follow-me functionality. Controlled within line-of-sight using simple remotes (e.g., infrared or basic radio frequency). Lacking professional-grade sensors (e.g., no HD cameras,

		thermal imaging, or LiDAR).
4	Design and Purpose	Intended for entertainment, education, or basic hobby use. Not designed or marketed for aerial photography, surveying, mapping, or any professional/commercial purpose.
5	Speed and Altitude	Restricted to low speeds (under 19m/s) and low altitude (below 120 feet or 36 meters). Limited vertical climb rates and maneuverability.
6	Age	Clearly labeled and marketed as a children's toy or a hobby item. Must comply with toy safety standards (e.g., ASTM F963 in the U.S. or EN71 in the EU).
7	Material construction	Made from lightweight, soft, or flexible materials (e.g., plastic or foam) to minimize potential harm. Designed to ensure minimal risk of injury or property damage.
8	Connectivity and Communication	No or limited use of communication systems like Wi-Fi, 4G/5G, or Bluetooth that could extend control range significantly. Operates on basic toy-grade frequencies (e.g., 2.4 GHz) with low range capabilities (e.g. under 100 meters).
9	Regulatory Requirements	Exempt from drone registration requirements by aviation authorities. Excluded from requirements to follow airspace regulations due to design limitations.
10	Cost	Typically, lower in price compared to drones or UAS (e.g., under 500 AED).
11	Autonomy	Limited autonomy, requiring constant manual control by the user. No pre-programmed flight paths or return-to-home capabilities.

6. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

REGISTRATION

1. All UA Pilots intending to operate UA in the emirate of Dubai for private or recreational use shall be registered with the DCAA.
2. UA Pilots shall be registered in accordance with Technical Standards in DCAR-UAS UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM OPERATIONS
   - ISSUE 03 Appendix 1.
3. All UA shall be registered in accordance with Technical Standards in DCAR-UAS UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM OPERATIONS
   - ISSUE 03 Appendix 2 .
4. All UAE based recreational UA pilots shall be licensed by a DCAA certified Training Organization in accordance with Technical Standards in DCAR-UAS UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM OPERATIONS
   - ISSUE 03 Appendix 3.
5. All tourist recreational UA Pilots shall comply with the minimum requirements as specified in DCAR-UAS UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM OPERATIONS
   - ISSUE 03 Appendix 3.

7. RECREATIONAL UA CATEGORIES

UA Categories

1. Three categories of operation are used in the Dubai Emirate as follows:
   i. Basic Category.
   ii. Advanced Category.
   iii. Certified Category.

Recreational UA Category

1. Recreational UA shall be categorized as Basic Category.

Recreational UA Limitations

1. Recreational UA shall comply with the following limitations:
    i. MTOM of the UA is less than 2.5 kg, including all ancillaries, payloads, batteries, add-ons, and any other installations on the UA, and
    ii. the UA have a maximum dimension of less than 1.0m, and
    iii. it is operated in Visual Line Of Sight (VLOS) only.
        a. VLOS Operations are contained within a distance of 500 meters from the UA pilot, subject to the restrictions in c. below.
        b. VLOS Operations are at an altitude below 122m (400 ft) height above the ground, within defined recreational UAS areas.
        c. VLOS Operations within private property areas shall be limited to the hight of the highest structure on the property.
        d. The UAV must be clearly visible to the recreational UA Pilot without any additional aids (such as binoculars or FPV goggles).
        e. The recreational UA Pilot monitors the area and controls the UAV to avoid collisions or obstacles.
    iv. the Recreational UA Pilot remain in a fixed location throughout the operation, and
    v. the UA is operated in DCAA approved recreational UA zones only, and
    vi. the UA maximum operating speed is less than 19 m/s.

Recreational UA Accepted Types

1. A list of Recreational UA that are accepted for recreational UA operations in the Emirates of Dubai are available on the DCAA website at www.dcaa.gov.ae.
2. UA types not listed above requires approval from DCAA to be operated as recreational UA.
3. Applications for approval shall be done through the DCAA e-services at **DCAA - Application for registration of a drone for personal non-commercial use**

8. RECREATIONAL UA OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Recreational UA Basic Requirements

1. UA that are to be used in recreational UA Operations shall:
    i. provide the UA Pilot with clear and concise information on the height of the UA above the ground.
    ii. be safely controllable with regards to stability, handling, maneuverability, and the command and-control link performance, by a remote pilot following the manufacturer's instructions, as necessary under all anticipated operating conditions including failure conditions.
    iii. be able to withstand all possible loads and flight conditions stated by the manufacturer's operational instructions.
    iv. be exclusively powered by electricity.
    v. have a unique physical serial number on the UA.
    vi. provide the UA Pilot with clear warning when the battery of the UA or its Command Unit decreased to a low level ensuring that the remote pilot has sufficient time to safely land the UA.
    vii. be equipped with a DCAA approved remote identification system providing clear and detailed information about the UAS, Operator and the intended operation.
    viii. be equipped with DCAA approved geo-awareness system managing the approved operations area information and limitations,
    ix. have a user's manual providing operational and maintenance instructions.

Limitations for Recreational UA Operations

1. The distance to any uninvolved people or crowds shall be at a minimum equal to the height of the UA from the ground.
    i. For recreational UA operation, a safety distance shall be calculated at a ratio of 1 to 1.
    ii. Example: UA flight at 100m altitude shall remain clear of uninvolved persons or crowds by a minim distance of 100m.
2. Any recreational UA operation shall be planned in a way to ensure a safety distance from:
    i. assemblies of uninvolved people,

ii. from any buildings and structures,
iii. from other UA,
iv. airport, heliports, helicopter landing sites or airfields.

3. No recreational UA shall fly over:
   i. Military areas,
   ii. Prohibited, Restricted or Danger areas,
   iii. Any other airspace restricted for operations as determined by the DCAA.
4. Unless specifically authorized by the DCAA for a particular mission, no recreational UA operation shall be allowed to fly continuously over:
   i. pedestrian paths,
   ii. motorways,
   iii. metro and tram lanes
5. Recreational UA Pilots shall ensure that:
   i. Priority is given to manned aircraft operations in accordance with Law No. (4) of 2020 Regulating Unmanned Aircraft in the Emirate of Dubai - Article 32, and this regulation.
   ii. The UA is contained within the planned and approved operational area.
   iii. The UA is equipped with a DCAA approved Remote Identification System and ensures that it is operational for the duration of the operation.
   iv. Remote Identification System is integrated to the UTM providing required information accurately.
   v. Those operations are planned and performed minimizing noise and nuisances to people and animals.
   vi. The DCAA is informed in the event of any incident, accident, or unplanned termination of operations in compliance with the DCAA Occurrence Reporting Process.
6. UA operator shall ensure the serviceability (i.e., airworthiness) of its UA.

9. RECREATIONAL UA INCIDENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Recreational UA Pilot Responsibilities for Incident Reporting

1. The Recreational UA Pilot shall report any accident and serious incident.
2. The report shall contain all pertinent information, known to the operator, about the accident or

serious incident.

3. Reports shall be made within 3 hours of the accident/ serious incident occurrence.
4. Where relevant, the Recreational UA Pilot shall produce a follow-up report to provide details of actions it intends to take to prevent similar occurrences in the future.
5. Reports shall be submitted to the DCAA via the DCAA website at DCAA - Safety Report
6. The following list while not exhaustive includes types of occurrences involving UA Operations, which shall be reported:
    i. Crashes
    ii. Interferences with signal or control of the UA.
    iii. Near miss with a manned aircraft or other UA.
    iv. Collisions with other objects.
    v. Operation which results in a public nuisance.
    vi. Operations out of the area assigned for the UA operation.
    vii. A serious or fatal injury (third parties and own personnel)
    viii. UA lost whilst in operation.