

# FLYING AS A HOBBY AND AT A CLUB



From 31 December 2020 the rules for flying drones will be the same in the UK and all European member states. The rules don't apply if you are flying indoors.

They are based on the risk of the flight – where you fly, proximity to other people and the size of your drone are key.

The new rules are divided into three categories: Open, Specific and Certified.

The Open category is intended for low-risk drone flights, for example because you are flying a lightweight drone or in the countryside.

The Specific category is for higher risk flights such as flying a drone over an urban area. To be allowed to fly in this category you will need an operating approval from the Civil Aviation Authority. Members of a recognised UK model flying Association (BMFA, SAA, LMA & FPVUK) will be operating under the terms of a specific authorisation and should confirm details with their Association.

The Certified category is for large drones, for example transporting parcels above the city.

## Open category

Most enthusiasts or people flying for fun with a drone under 25kg will be in the Open category. You need to follow the [drone and model aircraft code](#). Some of the key rules are:

- > never fly higher than 120m / 400ft
- > always keep the drone in sight
- > Keep clear of any airspace restrictions, including around airfields, unless you have permission to fly within them

**i** *And always remember that you are responsible for your actions while flying*

All of the rules also apply if you are flying at night.

There are three 'sub categories' based on the weight of the drone:

A1 (C0 or C1 marked drones): You may fly over people with your drone if it is less than 250g, as long as it is not a crowd. Some slightly heavier drones (up to 900g) can also be used, but only if they have been 'classed' as being suitable.

A2: You must keep some distance from people, normally 30m. But this depends, among other things, on the drone you are flying (weight or label). To fly in the A2 category as well as passing the normal flyer ID online test you must also pass the A2 CofC theory exam. You must also declare that you have gained some practical knowledge with your drone, but you do not have to take a practical exam.

A3: You must stay at least 150 metres horizontally away from parks, industrial and built-up areas and 50 metres horizontally away from people.

## Registration and flyer ID

If your drone has a camera (unless it is a toy) or weighs 250g or more then you need to register with the CAA. You need to renew this registration every year.

Anyone flying a drone 250g or more needs to pass a test and get a flyer ID from the CAA. If you already have a flyer ID that is still valid, you don't need to re-do the test until it expires, although you are required to keep up to date with the new regulations.

More info at <https://register-drones.caa.co.uk/individual>

## Drone classification

From 1 January 2023 new drones will have to meet a set of product standards. These will be classed from C0 to C4, based on the weight and capability of the drone, and will determine how and where you can fly.

Drones classed C0 or C1 can be flown in the open A1 sub category. For C2 it's open sub category A2 or A3 and for classes C3 and C4 you can only fly in the A3 sub category.

If your drone doesn't have a class marking and is under 250g you can fly in the A1 sub category (there are also some exceptions for drones up to 500g too until January 2023). Drones less than 2kg can be flown in sub category A2, but you must keep at least 50 metres away from people and pass the A2 theory exam. Drones of 2kg or greater may only be flown in the A3 subcategory.

After 1 January 2023 for drones below 250g you can continue to use A1 sub category. All other current (un-classified) drones must only be used in the A3 sub category.

Home-built drones weighing less than 250g and with a maximum speed of less than 42mph (68Km/h, 19m/s) can be flown in the A1 sub category. All other drones fit in the A3 sub category.

## Minimum age to fly

In most cases you must be at least 12 years old to fly a drone on your own\*.

You can fly if you are under 12, but you must be supervised by someone 16 or over and both of you must have passed the flyer ID test.

## First Person View (FPV)

If you are flying using FPV then you must have an observer next to you who can aid you with avoiding collisions, but you are still responsible for the safety of your flight.

## Privacy

Wherever you fly your drone, consider the privacy of others. The Information Commissioner publishes advice at <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/drones/>

\*If you are under 12 and flying on your own then the drone must either be: privately built and be less than 250g or a toy and marked as a Class C0 drone