

Guidelines and Best Practices to follow for Drone Operations in the UAE (2019-2020)

Below is a list of Sanad's Guidelines for Drone Operations that we recommend to most of our clients and trainees undergoing certifications with us. These are suggestions only and we always recommend both Hobbyists and Commercial operators to check and keep themselves updated on the latest regulations.

Recommended habits:

- Fly in open areas and always pay attention to your environment before flying.
- Always follow the drone manufacturer's pre-flight checks. Prior to each flight, ensure that your aircraft is in safe, working condition and that all components are functional as prescribed by the manufacturer's operation manual.
- Remember that tall buildings can affect GPS reception. If there are tall buildings nearby, ensure you have good GPS reception before taking off. Do not fly if there are not enough satellite locks.
- Make sure your flight area is outside any no fly zones. (NFZ)
- Make sure your flight area is a designated "safe to fly" zone as marked out by DCAA and GCAA maps. Ensure you check these regularly for updates. GCAA has a "My Drone Hub" App that can be referenced.
- Ensure devices are not damaged and the batteries are fully charged
- Maintain Line Of Sight (LOS) of the drone at all times.
- Ensure the drone's moving parts, (especially the motor) are functioning normally.
- Ensure the drone's compass and other sensors are calibrated as per manufacturer's recommendations.
- Be alert for low-battery alarms, fly your drone back before the battery gets critical.
- Check the drone's propellers regularly for signs of cracks or damage. Ensure you replace the propeller if it's damaged.
- Always do radio range checks and watch out for interference. Land if the radio control signal is not good.
- If you notice low-flying aircraft nearby, land immediately.
- Always ensure you are obeying local laws and regulations of the area you're flying in.
- Always monitor your Drone's batteries when they are being charged.
- If you are a beginner, find a safe and open area to practice in before attempting more complex flights.

Things to avoid:

- Do not fly the aircraft in severe weather conditions. These include rain, low visibility, lightning and wind speeds exceeding the drone's performance envelope.
- Do not fly the aircraft above the authorized altitude, the maximum allowed altitude in the UAE is 400ft (120m) while the maximum distance from the PIC (Pilot in command) is 500m.
- Never fly a drone in an area where full-sized aircraft are operating. Helicopters, Airplanes, Paragliders and similar are some examples.
- Don't fly under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Don't answer incoming calls during flight.
- As per UAE law, don't take pictures of people without their consent. Respect the privacy of others when using a camera equipped aircraft.
- When traveling with your drone, make sure you check the LiPo battery regulations of the airline you will be flying with.
- Never fly anywhere near Military or Government buildings without proper permissions.
- Do not fly the drone beyond your visual range. UAE drone regulations do not allow BVLOS (Beyond Visual Line Of Sight) drone operations for hobbyists without proper permissions from authorities.
- Don't allow the aircraft to come into contact with liquids or water.
- Never fly a drone with broken or damaged antennas.
- Never fly a drone with damaged or puffy batteries. Always replace a drone's battery if you spot signs of wear and tear.

Information Sources:

Dubai Civil Aviation Authority Official Website: <https://www.dcaa.gov.ae/>

General Civil Aviation Authority Official Website: <https://www.gcaa.gov.ae/>

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