**[COVID-19 Updates and Guidance](https://filmlondon.org.uk/covid-19-updates-and-guidance)**

**Aerial Filming**

[Location Filming in London Code of Practice](https://basecamp.com/)

News Story

There are various permissions and considerations in order to operate a drone for aerial filming in London (note: *drones may also be referred to as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA) or Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)*).

Operators using drones for filming purposes must ensure they are familiar with aircraft legislation and procedures that relate to aerial filming in London.

In advance of filming, you need to ensure that you have:

* Permission from the owner or manager the land used for take-off and landing
* Appropriate control over the area you intend to use the drone. This will almost always need to include any persons or vehicles in the area
* Permission from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for Specific Category flights

**Take-off, Landing and Area Control**

Due to the nature of the local airspace and the density of population, there are some important restrictions on the operation of aircraft in and around the capital.

Drone operators require permission from the landowner for take-off and landing. This might be a private landowner, or it might be the local authority (particularly if you are in a park or on the pavement). If you are not sure who owns the land from where you plan to take-off and land you can contact Film London or check [Popular Locations](https://filmlondon.org.uk/resource/popular-locations). You can check which borough you are in with [this map](https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1KE3Tlm1Bhe4ZbE5bzhD69BZb7Js&hl=en_US&ll=51.4520474342403%2C-0.004550909423866045&z=10) and contact list of local authority film offices can be found here [Borough Film Service Contacts](https://filmlondon.org.uk/resource/borough-film-services-contacts).

In addition to the take-off and landing site, the drone operator will usually be required to have control of the area where they intend to operate. The level of control will depend on the planned activity and whether the flight is taking place in the Open or Specific Category. It is the responsibility of the drone pilot to establish which category the flight will take place in. For more information visit: [Open Category](https://www.caa.co.uk/Consumers/Unmanned-aircraft/Recreational-drones/Flying-in-the-open-category/) or [Specific Category](https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Aircraft/Unmanned-aircraft/Small-drones/Flying-in-the-specific-category/).

**Open Category**

Check whether you will be operating in this category and what qualifications you will need here [Open Category criteria](https://www.caa.co.uk/Consumers/Unmanned-aircraft/Recreational-drones/Flying-in-the-open-category/)

Open Category flights do not require CAA approval, but some permissions are still required if you are filming with a drone in this Category.

You will need to establish which sub-category is relevant to you. This will depend on the type of drone you will be using and how you intend to fly it:

* A1: the pilot can fly over people (although not over ‘assemblies of people’)
* A2: the pilot can fly close to people (usually up to 30m)
* A3: the pilot must fly far from people (50m from uninvolved people)

*As the A3 sub-category requires the pilot to be 150m from residential, commercial, industrial or recreational areas, A3 category drones cannot operate in most areas of London in the Open Category and must follow the Specific Category guidance.*

If you are not sure which sub-category you will be operating in, you can check here: [Requirements for Flying in the Open Category](http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP2012_EU_Drone_Rules_Factsheet_V7%207.pdf)

Apart from sub-category A1 flights involving unmanned aircraft that have a mass of less than 250g, all remote pilots operating in the Open Category are required to complete an online training course and successfully complete an online theory test before they can fly. The pilot will then be issued with a **‘flyer ID’**, valid for 5 years.

Before operating the drone you must ensure that you have permission from the landowner to take-off and land. Depending on the sub-category you are operating in, you may also need a level of control over the area you intend to fly, to ensure that you do not fly closer than permitted to people uninvolved with the activity. This may require you to obtain permission from the landowner / authority in advance of the flight.

You cannot cause an obstruction to the public highway without permission, so if you are operating a drone on the street and need a clear space to operate within you should liaise with the relevant authority well in advance (this will likely be the borough film service). Road closures or traffic control can often take many weeks to arrange, so this should be a consideration when you are choosing your location.

If you are filming in an open space, such as a park, it is important to check any relevant bylaws that might relate to flying a drone.

Regulations for operating drones in the Open Category focus on the safety of uninvolved people, however vehicles, vessels and structures should also be considered. In many cases they will have people inside them who need to be protected from the activity and the distance that you are required to remain from them still apply whether they are inside or outside. The Air Navigation Order (article 241) states *“A person must not recklessly or negligently cause or permit an aircraft to endanger any person or property.”*

In obtaining permission to take-off, land and / or to have control of an area, you may well be asked to submit an application and should expect to need to provide your Flier ID as well as information on how you intend to operate safely and within relevant guidelines.

**Specific Category**

Check whether you will be operating in this category and what qualifications you will need here [Specific Category criteria](https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Aircraft/Unmanned-aircraft/Small-drones/Flying-in-the-specific-category/)

When operating in the Specific Category you will need **Operational Authorisation** from the CAA. You will need permission from the landowner to take-off and land on their property and it is likely that you will need some control of the area over which you intend to fly.

While your CAA Operational Authorisation is one form of permission needed to carry out drone activity, it is the responsibility of the drone operator to ensure that they also have any relevant permissions from the landowner. As stated in the CAA’s [CAP 722](http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP722%20Edition8(p).pdf) guidance, *“an operational authorisation issued by the CAA only addresses the flight safety aspects of the UAS operation in the UK and does not constitute permission to disregard the legitimate interests of other statutory bodies such as the Police and Emergency Services, Highways England, Data Commission, Ofcom or local authorities”.*

Your Operational Authorisation will detail how closely you may fly to structures, vessels, vehicles and people not under your control. It is likely that you will require some level of control over the area you intend to fly. It is important that you liaise with the relevant landowner / authority to obtain permission to do so and this may involve applying for road closures or traffic control (please ensure that you allow appropriate lead-in time; road closures on some London streets can take 12 weeks to arrange).

In obtaining permissions you will probably be asked to complete an application form and should expect to be asked to provide your **Operator ID, Flyer ID, flight plan, CAA Operational Authorisation**and**RAMS** (risk assessment and method statement) detailing any control measures you plan to put in place to ensure people not involved with the activity are protected.

**CAA Permission**

Drone operators flying in the Specific Category must be in possession of a **CAA Operational Authorisation**. The Operational Authorisation document sets out the privileges and limits of the flight. Each Operational Authorisation is specific to the named drone operator. Operators may not need to apply to the CAA for each individual flight, but they must work within the conditions of a pre-determined risk assessment, or their own risk assessment, that is agreed with the CAA to obtain their Operational Authorisation.

[Read the CAA guidance](https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Aircraft/Unmanned-aircraft/Small-drones/Flying-in-the-specific-category/)

[Apply for CAA drone Operational Authorisation](https://apply.caa.co.uk/CAAPortal/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=UAS)

For more information contact the CAA Flight Operations Department on 01293 573 517 or [**UAVenquiries@caa.co.uk**](mailto:UAVenquiries@caa.co.uk).

**Restricted Airspace**

The drone operator is responsible for obtaining permission to fly within any restricted airspace in London. Restricted areas include Hyde Park (EG R157), City of London (EG R158) and Isle of Dogs (EG R159). Restricted areas are marked on aviation charts and listed in the [**UK Aeronautical Information Package (UK AIP)**](http://www.nats-uk.ead-it.com/public/index.php%3Foption=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=165&Itemid=3.html)**.**

Flight within these areas is restricted for all types of aircraft, whether manned or unmanned. To obtain permission the drone operator must apply for **Enhanced Non-Standard Flight clearance** via the [**NATS website**](http://www.nats.aero/nsf/)).

This clearance is also mandatory for all flights below 1400 feet above sea level.

[Learn more about restricted airspace here.](https://dronesafe.uk/restrictions/)

[Unmanned Aircraft Flight Planning Tool](http://www.noflydrones.co.uk/)

**Privacy and Copyright**

The Information Commissioner's Office has issued [**guidelines regarding privacy and the use of drones for filming purposes**](https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/drones/)**.**

Film London provides guidance on copyright, privacy and other [**legal considerations when filming people or buildings**](https://filmlondon.org.uk/filming-in-london/plan-your-shoot/make-sure-its-legal)**.**

**Insurance**

Public Liability cover of **at least £5m**will be required when using drones to film in London. Under some circumstances this may need to be increased.

**Further Guidance**

Further detailed guidance is available on the CAA website:

[Civil Aviation Authority on Unmanned Aircraft and Drones](http://www.caa.co.uk/Consumers/Unmanned-aircraft-and-drones/)

[The Drone and Model Aircraft Code](https://register-drones.caa.co.uk/drone-code)

[Flying for Fun](https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?catid=1&pagetype=65&appid=11&mode=detail&id=9948)

[Flying as a Hobby and at a Club](https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?catid=1&pagetype=65&appid=11&mode=detail&id=9949)

[Using a Drone for Work](https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?catid=1&pagetype=65&appid=11&mode=detail&id=9950)

[Flying in the Countryside](https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?catid=1&pagetype=65&appid=11&mode=detail&id=9951)

[Flying in Towns and Cities (or busy areas)](https://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?catid=1&pagetype=65&appid=11&mode=detail&id=9952)

Helicopter Filming

[Read the CAA's guidance for aerial filming by helicopter﻿](https://filmlondon.org.uk/index.php/actions/tools/tools/download-file?id=54466)

[15 KB PDF](https://filmlondon.org.uk/index.php/actions/tools/tools/download-file?id=54466)

* [Site Map](https://filmlondon.org.uk/sitemap)

Contact Details

* [General Enquiries: 020 7613 7676](tel:020%207613%207676)
* [Locations: 020 7613 7683](tel:020%207613%207683)

Film London, The Arts Building, N4 3JG