



GUIDANCE NOTES – SUA OPERATIONS (COMMERCIAL) IN LONDON 2019

These guidance notes are intended to accompany the Application Form – SUA Operations (Commercial) in London 2019.

Please note: Noncommercial drone operators should refer to the CAA's guidance "Dronesafe" which can be found at www.dronesafe.uk

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Disclaimer: The information set out in this document is offered as guidance only and may be superseded by information given by filming officers.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out (i) an overview of the application, consultation and approvals process; (ii) some of the main challenges an organiser may face; and (iii) requirements to ensure safe, successful and compliant practices, for aerial filming with SUA in participating areas of London.

SUA (Small Unmanned Aircraft) are also known as UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), drones, octocopters and by other names. They offer great flexibility for filmmakers.

Filming with SUA in large open-air areas where there are few people is relatively straightforward. However, filming in congested areas such as London is more complex, there are more rules and stakeholders requiring careful management, including multiple landowners and authorities, security issues and busy spaces.

This document sets out a non-exhaustive explanation of matters to consider and procedural steps required in order to use SUA for filming purposes in London.

2. Application Process

Any intention to use SUA in relation to filming or similar activities (such as scanning), must in the first instance be directed to the local authority's or authorities' film services department. It is also best practice to notify the relevant film services department if the SUA is to be used on private land, even if it will not be overflying the highway or council owned property. Should SUA activity overfly, or be used within 50m of any thoroughfares, in addition to making a filming application (see Common Requirements paragraph below) further documentation and permissions are likely be required.

It is possible you will require a traffic order or notice from the relevant authority, as well as agreements with *Occupiers* and *Landowners/Authorities*, before your activity can proceed. Traffic orders can take a few days or up to twelve weeks to approve, depending on your chosen location.

3. Timescales

Timescales for obtaining permissions will vary widely between film services, depending on the request and practicality. In the majority of cases, applicants will require with either a Road or River closure. Road closures can take anywhere from **5 days to twelve weeks** to process.

4. Named parties and definitions

Responsible Party: refers to the individual or legal entity (as applicable) who must (i) sign and agree to the terms and conditions as set out in the “Application Form – SUA Operations (Commercial) in London” and that constitutes a legal agreement with the council or relevant authority (ii) prove that it has suitable insurance for SUA use; (iii) ensure all necessary documentation, approvals, permits and agreements are secured and are in place; and (iv) assume ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the SUA activities set out in the “Application Form – SUA Operations (Commercial) in London”.

Drone: an unmanned aircraft having a mass of not more than 20 kg (without its fuel but including any articles or equipment installed in or attached to the aircraft at the commencement of its flight, including batteries).

Landowners / Authorities: third parties (i) who either own or are responsible for maintaining the *open-to-air* land, waterways, permanent ways or similar; and (ii) whose consent is be required before any directly or indirectly overflying SUA operation can take place.

SUA: Small Unmanned Aircraft meaning the Drone

SUA Operator(s): the individual or company engaged by the *Responsible Party* to provide, plan, and safely execute the operation of the SUA. The SUA Operator(s) is required to fulfil its legal duties with respect to the *Responsible Party*, ensure it is satisfied that any safety conditions are in place for its flight, and who is ultimately responsible for deciding whether a flight should proceed or not.

Occupiers: individuals who inhabit premises, either business or residential, and who are likely to be in residence during the SUA Operations. These *Occupiers* must be consulted with in advance and, if necessary, briefed prior to any SUA activity.

Buffer Zone: a controlled area, within a 50m three-dimensional radius of the Drone (or a distance agreed to by the CAA (by an OSC) and by the authority).

5. Common Requirements

- **A Flight Impact Zone Map**: a planning map, highlighting the flight area, plus the *Buffer Zone*. The map must include either closure or control points located at least 50m away from the area where the RPA will be flown. This must be supplied at the beginning of the process.
- **A Traffic Order or Traffic Notice** (where applicable): required if the FIZ is close to or includes a highway.
- **A Traffic Management Plan** (where applicable): required in the vast majority of cases to support the Traffic Order or Traffic Notice application.
- **Evidence of Landowner Permission** (where applicable): required if the FIZ affects any privately-owned land.
- **Evidence of Consultation**: reasonable evidence to show an agreement has been secured with all individuals to be impacted by the use of the SUA.



- **RAMS:** Risk Assessment and Method Statement of the whole production, which must be specific to the operation in question.
- **Contingency Plan:** description and maps of where and what safety measures will be in place, should there be a reason to abandon the SUA flight plan.
- **Stewarding Plan:** description and maps of what control measures will be in place and where stewards will be located whilst the SUA in use.
- **Flight Plan:** to be authored and implemented by the SUA Operator, which should include all relevant authorisation and scaled maps, such as CAD or other such as planning maps indicating the FIZ.
- **Operational Safety Case or OSC** (where applicable): as may be issued by the Civil Aviation Authority to the SUA Operator.
- **Consultation:** two forms of consultation will be required with most SUA applications to local authorities and agencies. It is important to understand the distinction and what is required of both:
 - **Landowner Consent:** The Local authority or agency expects the Responsible Party to obtain a formal written consent or permission from the Landowner to operate any open-to-air land within a 50m of the Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA). This will need to be in the form of a written agreement between the landowner and the Responsible Party. Where the local authority consent is required, this will often be dependent on confirming occupier agreements, or any other permissions or consents deemed to be required
 - **Occupier Agreement / consultation / briefing:** any premises (building, open space or otherwise) with sitting occupants, such as businesses or residents within *the Flight Impact Zone (FIZ)*, **must** be consulted and this must be evidenced in writing prior to obtaining Local authority or agency consent. Where access controls are required for safety then a written agreement between the Occupier(s) and the Responsible Party is needed prior to any flights taking place.

6. Legal and liability issues

There are a number of laws that relate to flying and filming with SUA equipment. For details please see documentation provided by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).