

## **Basic Guidance Material for Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA) Permission, Pilot Competency Certificate (PCC) & Special Authorisation / Approval (SA)**

### **Specific Operating Permission - SOP:**

A Small Unmanned Aircraft SOP is required when a Drone (SUA /UAS) Operator intends to fly a Drone(s) conversely, differing and prescriptively alternative to the statutory limitations as detailed in SI. 563/2015 (Small Unmanned Aircraft and Rockets Order). The SOP holder will have completed a safety course of instruction which includes risk management principles and operations theoretical knowledge and other subject matter, available at Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) Registered Training Facilities (RTF). The SOP application is form U.F.100 available in this section of the website. For further information, including syllabi, locations and cost of training please contact the RTF also listed in this Section.

The operator may also receive theoretical / flight training towards a Pilot Competency Certificate (PCC). The SOP is valid for a period of two years recorded from the date on the Course Completion Certificate issued by the RTF.

The key to safe and successful Drone flight operations is understanding and applying safety regulations and application of safety risk principles through continued training and awareness. This is fundamental philosophy in aviation. Therefore, SOP holders are required to undergo refresher / renewal training through an RTF and within twelve months of the SOP expiry date to ensure continuous validity. This is solely and entirely the responsibility of the SOP Holder. SOP Operators may only utilise PCC holders to fly their Drones as listed within the SOP Operations Manual (OM). An SOP is valid only in the Republic of Ireland.

SOP holders are required to have current Insurance third party liability cover. The monetary value of liability should be proportionate to the scope and nature of intended use and operations. An SOP may be accepted at the discretion of other Member States or Third Country Authorities.

### **Pilot Competency Certificate – PCC:**

Small Unmanned Aircraft PCC's are issued upon receipt of a satisfactory Application (*Form U.F.102 and available within this Section of this website*). Theoretical knowledge and flight training are accomplished through Drone (SUA) RTF's (*listed in this Section of this website*). Upon successful completion of a safety course (theoretical and flight training) at an RTF including receipt of course certificate, the Applicant may formally apply for a PCC utilising form U.F.102 FW – H – M. The form must be endorsed by the SUA Examiner (who administered the required skills & oral knowledge test) and recommends issue of a PCC on behalf of the Applicant.

The PCC is valid for a period of two years from the date recorded on the course completion certificate. Prior to expiry PCC holders should apply at the earliest to ensure continuity, using the application form U.F.102. Renewal and refresher training and testing may be received at an RTF ninety (90) days prior to the PCC expiry date The PCC is valid and limited to SOP operations only.

PCC's are subject to conditions and limitations detailed within the SOP's OM. PCC holders are expected to understand their responsibilities, risk assessments and operational limitations in accordance with the SOP OM. It is solely and entirely the responsibility of the PCC holder to ensure the current validity of the PCC, not the SOP holder. PCC holders may operate as freelance. PCC holders are required to maintain documented logs of work and flight operations they have conducted, including SOP holder names, locations, dates, times and type of Drones operated.

**Please Note:** *The logs may be subject to scrutiny by Irish Aviation Authority Safety Regulation Inspectors and Garda Siochana (Police) upon demand.*

### **SUA Special Authorisation / Approval – SA:**

The Irish Aviation Authority may consider an application from another Member State Operator who holds a similar Specific Operating Permission / Authorisation/ Approval, to conduct a one time/one-off work / job. This will require submission of necessary documentation including company registration, operations manual, copies of PCC or equivalent, sufficient third party insurance, a detailed survey and risk assessment for the specific operation concerned and Land Owners written authorisation. The Operator must become familiar with the regulation and procedures concerning Drone operations centric to Ireland. This documentation is not exhaustive. If/and after an operator requires to conduct further flights under Irish SOP standards the operator will be required to apply for and attend a Registered Training Facilities (RTF) as listed in this Section of the website.

### **Present and New Regulatory Framework for Drones (UAS)**

Ireland has no existing bi-lateral agreements concerning drones under National Law. As a Member State of the European Union Ireland is subject to European Union Regulations which takes precedence over National Law. The European Union's rule making body for aviation is the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) with responsibility for civil aviation safety through governance and enforcement of standards, certification, regulation, investigation, aviation security and compliance monitoring.

In September 2018 the new aviation (Basic Regulation) EU Regulation 2018/1139 was issued replacing EU Regulation 216/2008: (website <https://www.easa.europa.eu/regulations>)

During June 2019 the European Parliament passed in to law EU Regulation 2019/945 (Delegated Act) and EU Regulation 2019/947 (Implementing Regulation) (Annex I - Part UAS). This will enable European harmonisation of safety standardisation and operations for Drones below the 25KG Maximum Take Off Mass (MTOM).

The transition from National regulations to European regulations will be over 1 and 2 years.

Under the new implementing regulation Annex, Part UAS – Specific Category, there is a marked difference in the prescriptive requirements of a 'Specific Operational Risk Assessment' than the existing standards acceptable for SOP issuance previously. New Acceptable Means of Compliance (AMC) and Guidance Material (GM) to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/947, first

issued 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019. The contents are the prescriptive interpretation of the regulation to be compliant. Over time these will grow and change in accordance with utilisation and the benefit of developed safety standards: (website <https://www.easa.europa.eu/regulations>)

The National Specific Operating Permission, SOP, will be phased out July 2020. The new regulation EU Regulation 2019/947, Annex I - Specific Category will require a 'Declaration' (low risk) for Specific Operations when an Operator intends to utilise a Drone in accordance with published Standard Scenarios (STS-01) including accompanying standard risk assessment, or an operational risk assessment completed by the Operator and submitted to the Authority for acceptance under a Standard Scenario (STS). The Operator may be required to develop an operation's manual (OM).

The Specific Category - Light Unmanned Aircraft Systems Certificate (LUC) will replace the SOP, but on a more complex level than a Declaration. Issue of the LUC will require additional training, including management and administration of a Safety Management System (SMS), detailed risk management and application of SORA: Specific Operations Risk Assessment that will require a greater degree of understanding and application than was previously expected and accepted under the SOP.

It is envisioned the Authority will provide workshops within the next 3-5 months to assist SOP holders with regulatory transition.

***Please Note:***

*All SOP & PCC holders should regularly check for updates, changes and notices at:*

**[www.iaa.ie/general-aviation/drones](http://www.iaa.ie/general-aviation/drones)**