



ÚDARÁS EITLÍOCHTA NA hÉIREANN
IRISH AVIATION AUTHORITY

Consultation on the Irish Aviation Authority (Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones)) Draft Order 2026

18th September 2026



Consultation Note:

The Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) invites stakeholders and members of the public to a consultation on the [Irish Aviation Authority \(Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(Drones\)\) Draft Order 2026](#). As part of this process, we are inviting feedback from stakeholders and the wider public.

We welcome your views and encourage you to participate by completing the [online consultation form](#). The deadline for submissions is 1700 on 9th October 2026.



If you experience any difficulties using the Microsoft Forms platform, please contact us at consultation@iaa.ie

*This email address should not be used for submissions.

Memo on the Irish Aviation Authority (Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones)) Draft Order 2026

Have Your Say on the Future Regulation of Drones in Ireland

The Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) is inviting interested parties to participate in a public consultation on the proposed Irish Aviation Authority (Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones)) Order 2026.

The proposed Order will replace the current 2023 Order and introduces a range of updated national measures designed to support the safe, secure and responsible operation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), commonly known as drones, within the State.

As drone technology continues to evolve and become increasingly integrated into commercial, recreational, public service and critical infrastructure activities, it is important that Ireland's regulatory framework remains effective, proportionate and aligned with European Union aviation safety requirements. The proposed Order is intended to complement and give further effect to the European regulatory framework governing drone operations while addressing matters that require national implementation.

The IAA welcomes submissions from drone operators, remote pilots, representative bodies, commercial operators, aerodrome operators, public authorities, emergency services, law enforcement agencies, manufacturers, training organisations, industry stakeholders and members of the public.

Purpose of the Proposed Order

The proposed Order is made pursuant to powers contained in the Irish Aviation Authority Act 1993 and is intended to establish a comprehensive national framework supporting the regulation, oversight and enforcement of drone activities in Ireland.

In particular, the proposed Order:

- Provides national measures that complement the European Union rules governing drone operations.
- Establishes powers relating to investigations and inspections concerning drone operations and occurrences.
- Clarifies the respective roles of the IAA, An Garda Síochána and aerodrome operators in relation to enforcement and safety oversight.
- Introduces provisions relating to the authorisation and deployment of Counter-UAS systems at certified aerodromes.
- Provides mechanisms for directions, exemptions, permissions and authorisations where appropriate.
- Addresses insurance, privacy and data protection requirements applicable to drone operations.

The Order seeks to ensure that Ireland continues to support innovation and the beneficial use of drone technology while maintaining high standards of aviation safety, security, privacy and public protection.

Key Proposals

Scope and Application

The proposed Order applies generally to unmanned aircraft systems and their operation within or over the State. It also provides for the application of the regulatory framework to public-interest activities such as search and rescue, firefighting and coast guard operations, while recognising that compliance with normal rules may not always be possible during emergency situations. The Order does not apply to drones under the control of the Defence Forces, An Garda Síochána or the Revenue Commissioners.

Directions and Exemptions

The proposed Order would empower the IAA to issue directions necessary to give effect to the Order and, where appropriate, grant exemptions subject to specified conditions. Such conditions would be legally binding and enforceable in the same manner as a direction issued under the Order.

Insurance Requirements

The draft provisions allow the IAA to require operators of drones to maintain insurance in respect of aviation-specific liability to third parties. Where directed by the Authority, operators would be required to ensure that appropriate insurance cover is maintained for each flight.

Privacy and Data Protection

Recognising the increasing capability of drone technology to gather and process information, the proposed Order places emphasis on compliance with data protection law. Operators would be required to process personal data in accordance with applicable legislation and, where necessary, complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment. In addition, the IAA would be empowered to establish minimum operating heights and conditions for privacy and data protection purposes.

Investigation Powers

The proposed Order contains comprehensive provisions enabling the IAA to investigate occurrences involving drones that have caused, or could have caused, a hazardous effect. The Authority may inspect equipment, obtain information, access premises, examine records and detain drones where necessary for the purpose of an investigation.

The Order also provides that the Authority may authorise or delegate qualified persons or organisations to inspect manuals, procedures, operational arrangements and competencies where this is considered necessary to support the safe operation of a drone or the granting of permissions.

Enforcement and Cooperation with An Garda Síochána

The proposed Order establishes a clear framework for cooperation between the IAA and An Garda Síochána in relation to suspected breaches of aviation legislation affecting drone operations. It provides powers for Gardaí to detain drones where breaches are suspected and to direct operators not to conduct operations where there is a risk of non-compliance or criminal activity. The Order also facilitates information sharing and the development of administrative arrangements between the Authority and An Garda Síochána.

Counter-UAS Systems at Aerodromes

One of the most significant proposals within the draft Order concerns the deployment of Counter-UAS systems at certified aerodromes. These systems are designed to detect, track, identify and mitigate unauthorised drone activity. The proposed Order would permit certified aerodrome operators to deploy such systems, subject to approval by the Authority.

The Order would also provide aerodrome operators with powers to take appropriate action where a drone operation presents a risk to aviation safety, people or property. These provisions are intended to strengthen resilience against the threat posed by unauthorised drone activity in the vicinity of airports and support the continued safe operation of Ireland's aviation infrastructure.

Revocation of Existing Order

The proposed Order would revoke the [Irish Aviation Authority \(Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(Drones\)\) Order 2023](#) and replace it with an updated framework. Existing permissions, directions and exemptions in force immediately before commencement would continue to remain valid through the inclusion of transitional provisions.

Why Your Views Matter

Drone technology presents significant opportunities across a broad range of sectors, including infrastructure inspection, agriculture, surveying, emergency response, environmental monitoring, media production and logistics. At the same time, increasing levels of drone activity present

challenges relating to aviation safety, security, privacy, enforcement and the protection of critical infrastructure.

The IAA is committed to developing a regulatory framework that supports innovation while safeguarding the public interest. Meaningful consultation with stakeholders is therefore an essential part of the regulatory process.

The Authority is particularly interested in receiving views on:

- The effectiveness and proportionality of the proposed enforcement powers.
- The practical implementation of the investigation provisions.
- The proposed arrangements concerning Counter-UAS systems at certified aerodromes.
- The impact of the proposed requirements on commercial and recreational drone operators.
- The interaction between the proposed provisions and existing privacy and data protection obligations.
- Any operational, legal or technical issues arising from the draft Order.
- Any other matters that consultees believe should be considered before the Order is finalised.

How to Submit Your Views

The IAA invites all interested parties to review the [draft Irish Aviation Authority \(Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(Drones\)\) Order 2026](#) and submit observations, comments or recommendations.

Submissions should clearly identify the relevant provision of the draft Order to which comments relate and, where possible, include supporting rationale or evidence.

All submissions received during the consultation period will be carefully considered before the Order is finalised.

Please submit your views on our [consultation response form](#).

Consultation Period

The consultation will remain open for the period of three weeks until **9th October 2026**. Interested parties are encouraged to submit their views as early as possible to ensure adequate consideration of all responses.

Further Information

The [draft Irish Aviation Authority \(Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(drones\)\) Order 2026 for Public Consultation](#) is available from the Irish Aviation Authority.

The IAA looks forward to engaging constructively with stakeholders and members of the public as it develops a modern and effective regulatory framework for drone operations in Ireland, supporting safety, innovation and public confidence in the rapidly evolving unmanned aircraft sector.