

New drone regulations to come into force in 2020

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Further to the Unmanned Vehicles Technology Innovation Experimentation Act, which entered into force on 1 June 2019, a new regulation for drone use under the latest amendment to the Civil Aviation Act will take effect on 31 March 2020. Under the new act, drone operators in Taiwan will need to register with and pass an exam conducted by the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) to obtain an operator licence.

Drone use is permitted in Taiwan and the government actively creates regulatory sandboxes for unmanned vehicles, vessels and drones in addition to its legislative efforts to harmonise drone regulations under the existing Civil Aviation Act.

According to the Unmanned Vehicles Technology Innovation Experimentation Act, the government will allow a period of up to four years for possible deregulation to encourage start-ups and enterprises to conduct innovative experiments relating to the technological development, services and operations of unmanned vehicles, vessels and drones.

Alongside the above regulatory reform, on 23 July 2019 the Ministry of Transportation and Communications published a new drone regulation, the Administrative Rules on Remote Drones, which details the drones to be regulated and the requirements for the production, import, sale, use and registration of drones.

As the registration authority empowered by the amendment to Civil Aviation Act, the CAA has set out the following rules for drones:

- Privately owned drones weighing 250g or more must be registered with the CAA.
- Drones owned by government agencies, schools or legal entities must be registered with the CAA, regardless of weight.
- A registration code is valid for two years and must be attached to the drone while in operation.
- Type approvals are required for the design, production, modification and import of drones. Drones that weigh 25kg or more must receive additional inspection approval from the CAA, which will be valid for up to three years.
- Private owners of drones that weigh 2kg or more and government agencies, schools and legal entities that operate drones must have remote pilot licences. Individuals must be at least 16 years old to own a drone.

The regulation does not differentiate commercial and recreation drone use. Further, foreign citizens with foreign government-issued remote pilot licences who travel to Taiwan with a drone will be required to have their licenced official recognised before operating the drone in Taiwan. The recognition will be valid for six months from the date of issuance.

The CAA and regional governments are expected to announce limited fly zones for drones in due course.

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