

Hoci Cymru

Drone Usage Policy and Procedures



Name of Author
Approved by
Approval dates
Review Date

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INTRODUCTION

Hoci Cymru is responsible for setting and maintaining standards within the sport, including the safe and responsible use of drones. To this end, Hoci Cymru ensures that a comprehensive Drone Usage Policy and associated procedures are in place to govern drone operations during training, matches and events.

Drones can provide benefits to the sport, including supporting coaching and performance analysis, event coverage, photography, broadcast activity and promotional content. However, their use must be carefully managed to ensure the safety and privacy of players, officials, workforce, volunteers, spectators and members of the public.

All individuals operating drones on behalf of, or in association with, Hoci Cymru are responsible for being aware of and complying with this policy and all applicable UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) requirements.

These standards are designed to protect privacy, ensure safety and safeguarding, and support compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

Where Hoci Cymru requirements are more restrictive than the minimum legal requirements, the requirements within this policy must be followed when operating in connection with a Hoci Cymru activity.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals, schools, clubs or organisations operating drones on behalf of or in association with Hoci Cymru, including staff, contractors, media personnel, and spectators.

The policy applies to drone use during Hoci Cymru matches, training sessions, competitions, camps, pathway activity, events and other Hoci Cymru-organised or sanctioned activity.

Spectators and members of the public are not permitted to operate drones at Hoci Cymru-controlled events or venues without prior authorisation.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Authorisation Required

All drone operations must be pre-approved by Hoci Cymru.

Operators must submit a request detailing the purpose of the operation, proposed location and flight area, intended date and time, operator details and relevant credentials at least 14 days in advance, unless otherwise agreed by Hoci Cymru.

Depending upon the proposed operation, Hoci Cymru may require evidence of:

- drone make, model, weight and class;
- Operator ID;
- Flyer ID;
- A2 Certificate of Competency (A2 CofC), where applicable;
- any required CAA Operational Authorisation;
- appropriate insurance;
- a flight-specific risk assessment;
- proposed take-off and landing areas; and
- arrangements for photography, filming, safeguarding and data protection.

Hoci Cymru approval does not replace any permission or authorisation required from the CAA, venue operator, landowner or other relevant authority.

Hoci Cymru reserves the right to refuse or withdraw permission for any drone operation.

2. Operator and Flyer Requirements

Drones must only be operated by individuals who meet the registration and competency requirements applicable to the aircraft and proposed operation under current CAA regulations.

Where required, the person or organisation responsible for the drone must hold a valid Operator ID, and the individual flying the drone must hold a valid Flyer ID.

An Operator ID must be correctly displayed on the aircraft where required.

Where the nature of the flight requires additional competency or authorisation, the operator must also hold the appropriate qualification or permission, such as an A2 Certificate of Competency (A2 CofC) or CAA Operational Authorisation.

Operators are responsible for checking the current CAA requirements applicable to their aircraft and intended operation before each flight.

3. Drone Classification and Remote ID

Operators must ensure their aircraft complies with applicable UK drone class-marking and transitional requirements.

Where Remote ID is required under current CAA regulations, it must be correctly configured and operational throughout the flight.

4. Insurance

Operators must provide evidence of appropriate public or third-party liability insurance covering the proposed drone operation where requested by Hoci Cymru.

All professional, commercial or other operations requiring aviation insurance must comply with applicable legal insurance requirements.

Hoci Cymru may require appropriate insurance for any drone operation authorised under this policy.

OPERATIONAL RESTRICTIONS

1. Flights Over the Pitch

Drones must not normally be flown directly over the playing surface during matches, training sessions, warm-ups or other hockey activity.

Where drone use is required for coaching, performance analysis, broadcast or another approved purpose, Hoci Cymru may authorise an alternative operating position following consideration of the relevant risks and applicable CAA requirements.

2. Flights Over People

Drones must not intentionally be flown directly over players, spectators, umpires, officials, staff or volunteers unless the operation is specifically authorised by Hoci Cymru, has been appropriately risk assessed and is permitted under applicable CAA regulations.

Drones must not be flown over crowds or assemblies of people where prohibited by CAA requirements.

The minimum separation distance from uninvolved people will depend upon the drone's weight, class and applicable CAA operating sub-category. Operators must comply with the legal separation distances applicable to their particular aircraft and operation.

Hoci Cymru may impose greater separation distances where considered appropriate for the safety of participants and spectators.

3. Altitude Limits

Drones must not normally exceed an altitude of 120 metres (400 feet) above the surface, in accordance with CAA requirements.

Any lower height restriction applicable to the aircraft, airspace or location must also be followed.

4. Restricted Zones

No drone flights are permitted within designated restricted zones, including team areas, changing rooms, and medical facilities.

Operators must also comply with all applicable aviation airspace restrictions.

5. Airspace

Before every flight, the operator must check whether the proposed flight is affected by restricted airspace, airport or aerodrome Flight Restriction Zones, temporary airspace restrictions, Notices to Aviation (NOTAMs) where applicable, emergency service activity or other restrictions.

Any permission required from an airport, air traffic control body, venue, landowner or other relevant authority must be obtained before the flight takes place.

6. Visual Line of Sight

The remote pilot must maintain the drone within Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) throughout the operation where required by the applicable CAA operating category.

The pilot must maintain awareness of the aircraft, surrounding airspace, people, structures and other potential hazards and be able to take immediate action where required.

SAFETY & COMPLIANCE

1. Risk Assessment and Pre-Flight Checks

All drone operations must be appropriately risk assessed.

Before commencing a flight, the operator must consider:

- weather conditions;
- condition of the aircraft and equipment;
- battery levels;
- take-off and landing areas;
- surrounding people and spectator movement;
- buildings, trees, cables and other obstacles;
- other aircraft;
- applicable airspace restrictions;
- emergency access;
- the manufacturer's operating limits; and
- any changes to the environment since the operation was approved.

A safe and suitable take-off and landing area must be used and, where appropriate, controlled to prevent unauthorised access.

2. Weather Conditions

Drones must not be operated in adverse weather conditions, including high winds, heavy rain, fog or other conditions that could compromise safe operation or exceed the manufacturer's operating limits.

The remote pilot is responsible for determining whether conditions remain safe throughout the flight.

3. **Live Events**

Drone usage during live events must be coordinated with the relevant Hoci Cymru Event Manager or designated representative and, where appropriate, venue and broadcast teams to avoid interference and ensure safe operation.

Consideration must be given to spectator movement, participant safety, event presentation, emergency procedures, safeguarding, privacy and other operational activity.

The Hoci Cymru Event Lead or designated representative may require a drone operation to cease immediately where there is a safety, safeguarding, privacy or operational concern.

4. **Safeguarding**

Particular care must be taken where drone operations involve children and young people.

All filming and photography must comply with Hoci Cymru safeguarding requirements and applicable photography and filming procedures.

Operators must not deliberately record changing facilities, toilets, medical areas, private team areas or other locations where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Any safeguarding concern arising from drone use must be reported through Hoci Cymru's established safeguarding procedures.

5. **Data Protection and Privacy**

Any video or photographic content captured using a drone must comply with applicable data protection legislation, including UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, together with Hoci Cymru's media, privacy and safeguarding policies.

Where individuals can be identified from drone footage, consideration must be given to:

- the purpose and necessity of recording;
- the lawful basis for processing;
- appropriate privacy information and event signage;
- the presence of children or young people;
- minimising unnecessary recording;
- who will have access to footage;
- secure storage and transfer;
- sharing with third parties; and
- appropriate retention and deletion arrangements.

A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) must be considered and completed where required.

Where an external drone operator captures footage on behalf of Hoci Cymru, appropriate arrangements must be in place governing the use, storage, sharing and retention of that footage.

6. Emergency Procedures

Operators must be prepared to respond appropriately to foreseeable incidents, including loss of signal, low battery, equipment failure, unexpected aircraft activity, people entering the operating area, collision or an emergency landing.

The flight must be terminated immediately where continued operation would present an unacceptable risk.

Any significant incident occurring during an authorised Hoci Cymru drone operation must be reported to Hoci Cymru and, where legally required, to the appropriate authority.

RESPONSIBILITY

Hoci Cymru authorisation does not remove or transfer the legal responsibilities of the drone operator or remote pilot.

The operator and remote pilot remain responsible for ensuring that:

- the aircraft is legally permitted to fly;
- all required registrations and qualifications are current;
- appropriate insurance is in place;
- the aircraft is safe and appropriately maintained;
- required Operator ID markings are displayed;
- Remote ID is active where required;
- the proposed airspace can legally be used;
- appropriate permissions have been obtained;
- applicable separation distances are maintained;
- the operation complies with the relevant CAA operating category; and
- all current legal and regulatory requirements are followed.

Operators must refer to the current CAA Drone and Model Aircraft Code before undertaking an authorised operation and must not rely solely upon this policy to determine whether a flight is legally permissible.

UNAUTHORISED DRONE USE

Where an unauthorised drone is observed at or around a Hoci Cymru activity, individuals must not attempt to interfere with, disable, capture or bring down the aircraft.

The matter should be reported immediately to the Event Lead or designated Hoci Cymru representative.

Where appropriate, Hoci Cymru may require the operator to cease flying, contact venue management or security, report the matter to the police or other relevant authority, and record the incident.

ENFORCEMENT

Violation of this policy may result in:

- immediate suspension of drone operations;
- withdrawal of permission to operate;
- removal from the venue;
- restriction from future Hoci Cymru activities;
- referral through relevant Hoci Cymru disciplinary or safeguarding procedures;
- reporting to the CAA, police, venue management or other relevant authorities; and
- legal action where necessary.

Hoci Cymru reserves the right to immediately stop any drone operation where it considers there to be a risk to safety, safeguarding, privacy or the effective delivery of an event.

Further Information

For further information about any aspect of the Hoci Cymru Drone Usage Policy and Procedures, please contact:

Hoci Cymru

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Sophia Gardens

Cardiff

CF11 9SW

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Operators should also refer to the current UK Civil Aviation Authority Drone and Model Aircraft Code for the latest legal and operational requirements.