



GHANA  
CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

# ADVISORY CIRCULAR AC 28-12

## REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM (RPAS) IMPORTATION PROCESS

### SECTION 1 GENERAL

#### 1.1 PURPOSE

This Advisory Circular (AC) provides guidance to individuals and organizations regarding the importation procedure and process generally applied by the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) for Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) or drones used for Recreational, Private and Commercial Purposes.

#### 1.2 STATUS OF THIS ADVISORY CIRCULAR

This AC is an original issuance.

#### 1.3 BACKGROUND

A. Article 8 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation stipulates:

**“No aircraft capable of being flown without a pilot shall be flown without a pilot over the territory of a Contracting State without special authorization by that State and in accordance with the terms of such authorization. Each contracting state undertakes to ensure that the flight of such aircraft without a pilot in regions open to civil aircraft shall be so controlled as to obviate danger to civil aircraft.”**

B. The Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), in addressing the use of RPAS in and into the State of Ghana has provided the Ghana Civil Aviation Directives Part 28 wherein the Authority has indicated clearly that:

- **No person shall import, export, sell or operate an RPAS or parts thereof without prior written approval of the Authority - GCAD Part 28.117,**
- **No person may operate an RPAS without having been registered by the Authority GCAD Part 28.61 and**
- **No person shall fly an RPAS without a Permit issued by the Authority- GCAD Part 28.7(1).**

C. Through the importation of an RPAS, the GCAA:

1. Ensures the protection of the public safety interest.
2. Exercises indirect influence on and control over the major aspects of the operation without encroaching upon the RPAS operator’s direct responsibility for safety.
3. Ensures the effective collation of all RPAS into a National Database.
4. Certifies that RPAS are used on a legal basis in the country.

## 1.4 APPLICABILITY

The guidance in this AC is applicable to the following:

- A. Importers of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS).
- B. Drone operators who intend to import a drone for Recreational, Private or Commercial Use.
- C. Foreign Nationals who intend to use their RPAS temporarily in Ghana.
- D. RPAS Vendors who import RPAS to sell.

## 1.5 RELATED DIRECTIVES

The following Directives are directly applicable to this guidance—

- Ghana Civil Aviation Directives Part 28
- Ghana Civil Aviation (Flight Standards) Directives Part 4

## 1.6 RELATED READING MATERIAL

For further information on this topic, persons are advised to review the following publications and regulatory requirements –

1. Ghana Civil Aviation Authority
  - AC 09-004 Registration of Aircraft
  - AC 28-002 RPAS Emergency Response Plan
  - AC 28-003 Guidelines for RPAS Category of Operations (CONOPS)
  - AC 28-007 RPAS Certification
  - AC 28-008 RPAS Registration Process
2. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
  - ICAO Manual on Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) (Doc 10019)
  - Annex 7, Aircraft Nationality and Registration Marks

## 1.7 ACRONYMS

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used in this advisory circular—

- 1) **AC** – Advisory Circular
- 2) **BVLOS** – Beyond Visual Line of Sight
- 3) **CBT** – Computer Based Training
- 4) **CONOPS** – Concept of Operations
- 5) **CPC** – Certification Project Coordinator
- 6) **GCAA** – Ghana Civil Aviation Authority
- 7) **GCADs** – Ghana Civil Aviation Directives
- 8) **ICAO** – International Civil Aviation Organization
- 9) **MTOW** – Maximum Take-off Weight
- 10) **OEM** – Original Equipment Manufacturer

- 11) **OPSPECS** – Operations Specifications
- 12) **POPS** – Prospective Operator Pre-Assessment Statement
- 13) **ROC** – RPAS Operator Certificate
- 14) **ROM** – RPAS Operator Manual
- 15) **RPA** – Remotely Piloted Aircraft
- 16) **RPAS** – Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems

## **1.8 UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS**

This AC provides aid in understanding and applying for the importation process.

- It is essential to understand that this process may result in a decision not to allow the importation of the RPAS presented.
- The importation process described may not exhaust all scenarios of importation and may be augmented to fit special case scenarios which may arise.
- A review of the process is done periodically to improve upon its efficiency and applicability in the Ghana RPAS industry.
- If there is an amendment to the process, it would be made known to the public through the available means of communication.

## SECTION 2 CLASSIFICATION OF RPAS

### 2.1 SMALL RPAS

The **Ghana Civil Aviation Directives Part 28.6 (4)(a)(i)** defines Small RPAS as Unmanned aircraft with maximum take-off weight (MTOW) up to 1.5 kg and shall be flown only within the visual line of sight of the pilot.

### 2.2 LIGHT RPAS

The **Ghana Civil Aviation Directives Part 28.6 (4)(a)(ii)** defines Light RPAS as Unmanned aircraft with maximum take-off weight of more than 1.5 kg but less than or equal to 7 kg and shall be flown only within the visual line of sight of the pilot.

### 2.3 LARGE RPAS

The **Ghana Civil Aviation Directives Part 28.6 (4)(a)(ii)** defines Large RPAS as Unmanned aircraft with maximum take-off weight of more than 7 kg which is flown either within the visual line of sight of the pilot or beyond the visual line of sight of the pilot.

- A. In accordance with **GCADs Part 28.5(3)**, no person shall operate a large RPAS or RPAS with Type Certificate without a special certificate of airworthiness (restricted category), or an experimental certificate issued by the Authority.
- B. In accordance with **GCADs Part 28.9(3)** No person shall pilot a large RPAS or an RPAS with type certificate without having obtained a remote pilot licence from the Authority.

### 2.4 CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The classification of RPAS is irrespective of its configuration, i.e., Fixed Wing, Rotary Wing or Hybrid.
- B. For RPAS without Type Certificate, the MTOW is usually found on the manufacturer Specification Sheet or on their website. If in doubt, it is advised that you contact the supplier or OEM.
- C. For RPAS with Type Certificate, kindly consult the Type Certificate Data Sheet to obtain information on the MTOW in standard conditions.
- D. For additional information on the importation of large RPAS, kindly see Section 4.1 of this document.
- E. Small and Light RPAS are limited to within VLOS Operations as specified in GCADs Part 28.6 (4).
- F. Large RPAS may only operate BVLOS of the pilot with prior authorization of the Authority. Such intended operations shall require the development of a CONOPS to mitigate all risks that may arise out of the operations. Kindly refer to **AC 28-003** for more information.

## **SECTION 3 CLASSIFICATION OF RPAS USE**

### **3.1 RPAS RECREATIONAL USE**

- A. Recreational RPAS Use is defined as the use of an RPA/RPAS for the purpose of personal entertainment, fun or leisure.
- B. Recreational Use also encompasses RPAS used for personal educational purposes but not under the scope of an Approved RPAS Training Organization (RTO). The focus of this is self-learning opportunities with RPAS.

### **3.2 RPAS PRIVATE USE**

- A. Private RPAS Use is defined as any operation of an RPA/RPAS other than for recreation or for commercial operations or for monetary reward.
- B. RPAS Private Use is limited to entities or companies registered as Sole proprietorships, Partnerships, Companies Limited by Shares, Unlimited Liability Company or Companies Limited by Guarantee.

### **3.3 RPAS Commercial USE**

- A. Commercial RPAS Use refers to any operation of an RPA/RPAS for hire or remuneration.
- B. Commercial RPAS Use covers business operations either on a contractual or non-contractual basis.
- C. Kindly refer to Advisory Circular AC 28-007 (RPAS Certification) for more information on the process for registration of RPAS and Certification for Commercial Applicants.

### **3.4 CONSIDERATIONS**

- A. All private and recreational RPAS operations shall be limited to VLOS operations unless otherwise permitted by the Authority.
- B. No private or recreational RPAS Operator shall operate above 400 feet AGL or BVLOS without compliance with commercial RPAS requirements as specified by the Authority. See **AC 28-007** for details.

## SECTION 4 APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND PROCESSING

### 4.1 CUSTOMS CLEARANCE / IMPORTATION

In accordance with **GCADs Part 28.1(17)**, no person shall import an RPAS without the written approval of the Authority. The procedure to import RPAS into Ghana is as follows:

- A. The applicant shall apply using Application Form **R28-AF-001 (See Appendix A)**. If the purpose of the RPAS is Private, a Cover Letter on the company letterhead shall be attached to the form indicating the purpose of the RPAS and how it would be used together with copies of the Company Certificates of Incorporation/Registration and To Commence Business (where applicable). This letter shall be addressed to:

**The Director-General  
Ghana Civil Aviation Authority,  
Kotoka International Airport  
Accra – Ghana**

**Note 1: The letter must Attention: Director, Safety Regulation and shall be signed by an Accountable Executive.**

**Note 2: If the RPAS has been detained at the Customs Unit, a copy of the detention receipt shall be attached to the Application Form.**

**Note 3: As specified on the application form, a copy of a valid ID Card (Passport Biodata, National ID, Voters or Drivers' License) shall be attached.**

**Note 4: It is strongly advised that you apply for the Importation Clearance at least five (5) working days in advance of the intended date of importation. The Authority shall not be held responsible for delays in clearing your drone from Customs if application for clearance is received later than recommended. Completed applications can be emailed to [rpas@caa.com.gh](mailto:rpas@caa.com.gh) or submitted at the front desk of the GCAA.**

- B. The applicant shall pay the requisite charges as per the **RPAS Scheme of Charges (See Appendix C)**. Current payment instructions shall be relayed once the completed application is received.

**Note: These charges are paid to the Authority and have no bearing on the charges that may be levied by Ghana Revenue Authority.**

- C. After successful review of the application, the Authority shall issue a Clearance Authorization Letter to Ghana Customs for the purpose of clearing the RPAS.

**Note 1: An RPAS that does not meet the requirements of the Authority for the kind of operation being requested for shall not be given an import clearance.**

**Note 2: All required documentation for the RPAS operation shall be obtained before written approval is given to import.**

**Note 3: All imported RPAS shall have the manufacturer and serial number clearly identified on the RPA.**

- D. The Authority shall also issue a letter to the applicant on the requirements for the registration of RPAS, where applicable.

- E. The RPAS shall then be presented at the office of the GCAA to be registered after clearing from

customs as per **Sections 4.2, 4.3 or 4.4.**

**NB:** For more information about the RPAS registration process, kindly see GCAA Advisory Circular AC 28-008 (RPAS Registration Process).



## **SECTION 8 LIST OF APPENDICES**

### **8.1 APPENDIX A – GCAA FORM R28-AF-001 (APPLICATION TO IMPORT RPAS)**

Please access the current document at:

[https://www.gcaa.com.gh/web/wp-content/uploads/2024/RPAS/Application%20to%20Import\\_June%202024.pdf](https://www.gcaa.com.gh/web/wp-content/uploads/2024/RPAS/Application%20to%20Import_June%202024.pdf)

### **8.2 APPENDIX B – GCAA FORM R28-AF-003 (APPLICATION TO REGISTER RPAS)**

Please access the current document at:

<https://www.gcaa.com.gh/web/wp-content/uploads/2024/RPAS/Application-for-RPAS-Registration-Form-R28-AF-003-24.pdf>

### **8.3 APPENDIX C – RPAS SCHEME OF CHARGES**

Please access the current document at:

<https://www.gcaa.com.gh/web/wp-content/uploads/2023/RPAS/2.%20RPAS-SCHEME-OF-CHARGES.pdf>

*End of Advisory Circular*