

The Drone Rules, 2021- Notified on August 25,2021

On **August 25, 2021** Ministry of Civil Aviation vide Notification no. **G.S.R. 589(E)** notified The Drone Rules, 2021 (“The Rules”) which shall come into force from August 25, 2021. The Rules will replace the UAS (Unmanned Aircraft System) Rules 2021 issued on **March 12, 2021**.

Link of the Notification is : <https://egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2021/229221.pdf>

Civil Aviation Minister Mr. Jyotiraditya Scindia said at a News Conference that “This drone policy is historic. We want to create a strong drone ecosystem in India. This policy will eliminate all unnecessary operational and entry barriers. We aim to make India a hub for drones by 2030. The drone policy will help generate employment opportunities as there are over 200 startups in this field.” He also said in the Press Conference that “Air taxis are being researched and invented globally, and many startups are coming up. That time is not far when taxis, like the ones of Uber, etc., that you see on roads, you will see in the air under the Drone Policy. I believe this is very much possible,” he added.”

The Rules are applicable to:

- (a) all persons owning or possessing, or engaged in leasing, operating, transferring or maintaining an unmanned aircraft system in India;
- (b) all unmanned aircraft systems that are registered in India; and
- (c) all unmanned aircraft systems that are being operated for the time being, in or over India

***Key Highlights of the Rules :**

1. Coverage of Drones has been increased from 300 kg to 500 kg now including heavy payload – carrying drones and drone taxis.
2. No security clearance is required before any registration or license issuance for Drones. The requisite fees for permissions has also been reduced to nominal levels. Quantum of fee has been reduced to nominal levels and delinked with the size of the drone. For instance , remote pilot license fee has been reduced from Rs. 3,000 (for large drones) and is valid for 10 Years
3. Many approvals have been abolished, including unique authorisation number, the unique prototype identification number, the certificate of conformance, the certificate of maintenance, the operator permits, the authorisation of the R&D organization, and remote pilot instructor authorisation among others.
4. The maximum penalty for violating the Rules has been reduced to 1 lakh, and even that is not applicable for penalties imposed for violation of other laws.
5. An Unmanned Aircraft System Promotion Council is to be set up to facilitate a business friendly regulatory regime.
6. The import of Drones will be regulated by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT). Drone corridors will also be developed for cargo deliveries.

7. Interactive airspace map with green, yellow, and red zones will be displayed on the Digital Sky Platform. The yellow zone has been reduced from 45km to 12km from the airport perimeter. No permission is required for operating a Drone in the green zone and up to 200 feet in the area between 8km-12km from the airport perimeter.
8. Online registration of all zones shall occur through the Digital Sky Platform, with an easy process prescribed for the transfer and deregistration of drones.
9. It aims to provide regularization of the existing Drones in India. All drone training and examination will be carried out by an authorised Drone school. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) shall prescribe training requirements, oversee drone schools, and provide pilot licenses online.
10. Safety features like 'No permission - No take-off' real-time tracking beacon, geo-fencing, and the like shall be notified in the future.
11. A minimum six-month lead time will be provided for compliance.

*(Source: The Free Press Journal, Livemint.com)