

Civil Aviation Transport Instrument

CATI:101.17

**Civil Aviation (Operation of Unmanned Aircraft,
Control Line Model Aircraft and Free Flight Model
Aircraft) Transport Instrument**

Initial Issue

Preliminary

The Director of Civil Aviation being satisfied that all persons and organisations that the Director considers appropriate have been consulted, having regard to the subject matter of this transport instrument, makes this transport instrument under section 431 of the Civil Aviation Act 2023 and Civil Aviation Rule 101.17.

Purpose

This transport instrument specifies, for the purpose of rule 101.17, the obligations and conditions for a person who operates an unmanned aircraft, control line model aircraft and free model aircraft.

Issue of Civil Aviation Transport Instrument

Signed by:
Director of Civil Aviation

Date

Revision History

Initial Issue	
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Civil Aviation (Operation of an Unmanned Aircraft, Control Line Model Aircraft and Free Model Aircraft) Transport Instrument [CATI 101.17]

[Note: Text carried from Subpart E of Civil Aviation Rule Part 101. Inserted text in existing wording is shaded, deleted texts are ~~struck through and shaded~~]

Subpart A – General Requirements

1.1 Title

This civil aviation transport instrument is the Civil Aviation (Operation of Unmanned Aircraft, Control Line Model Aircraft and Free Model Aircraft) Transport Instrument and may be referred to as CATI 101.17.

1.3 Commencement date

This civil aviation transport instrument comes into force on 31 December 2025.

1.4 Definitions

Terms used in this transport instrument have the same meaning as in Part 1 of the Civil Aviation Rules.

1.7 Control line model aircraft

A person must not operate a control line model aircraft with a single or multiple wire system longer than 30 m.

1.9 Aerodromes

(a) A person must not operate a **remotely piloted aircraft** or a free flight model aircraft on or within 4 km from the boundary of—

(1) an uncontrolled aerodrome, unless—

(i) the operation is undertaken in accordance with an agreement with the aerodrome operator; and

(ii) in the case of a free flight model aircraft, the aircraft is launched downwind of an active runway; and

(iii) in the case of a remotely piloted aircraft – each pilot has an observer in attendance while the aircraft is in flight; and the aircraft is not operated at a height of more than 400 feet above ground level unless the operator has been approved by the Director to operate the aircraft above 400 feet above ground level; and

(2) a controlled aerodrome, unless it is operated in accordance with an authorisation from the relevant ATC unit; and

(3) any aerodrome, unless the person— is the holder of, or is under the direct supervision of the holder of, a pilot qualification issued by an approved person or organisation (see clause 1.9); or is under the direct supervision of a person appointed to give instruction in the operation of remotely piloted aircraft by an approved person or organisation; or is the holder of a pilot licence or certificate issued under Part 61 or Part 149.

~~(b) A person must not operate a remotely piloted aircraft, a control line model aircraft or a free flight model aircraft—~~

~~(1) on or over any active movement area of an aerodrome; or~~

~~(2) on or over any active runway strip area.~~

(c) Paragraph (a) does not apply to a shielded operation that is conducted—

(1) outside of the boundary of the aerodrome; and

(2) in airspace that is physically separated from the aerodrome by a barrier that is capable of arresting the flight of the aircraft.

(d) Paragraph (a)(3) does not apply to a free flight model aircraft.

1.11 Airspace

(a) A person operating a remotely piloted aircraft must—

(1) unless operating in a danger area under Part 71, avoid operating—

(i) in airspace above persons who have not given consent for the aircraft to operate in that airspace; and

(ii) above property unless prior consent has been obtained from any persons occupying that property or the property owner; and

(2) maintain observation of the surrounding airspace in which the aircraft is operating for other aircraft; and

(3) not operate the aircraft at any height above 400 feet above ground level except in accordance with paragraph (c).

(b) Nothing in paragraph (a) requires a person to obtain consent from any person if operating—

(1) under the authority of an approved organisation; and

(2) in airspace used by that organisation before 1 August 2015.

(c) A person operating a remotely piloted aircraft more than 4 km from an aerodrome boundary and above 400 feet above ground level must —

(1) operate in a danger area designated for that purpose under Part 71; or

(2) ensure that the operation remains within Class G airspace and that at least 24 hours before the operation, a person authorised by an approved person or organisation, notifies the aeronautical information service provider, for the issue of a NOTAM, of the following information:

(i) the name, address, and telephone number of the operator:

(ii) the location of the proposed operation:

(iii) the date, time and duration of the proposed operation:

(iv) the maximum height above ground level proposed for the aircraft operation.

1.13 Visual line of sight operation

(a) This clause applies to the following types of aircraft:

(1) a remotely piloted aircraft:

(2) a free flight model aircraft.

(b) A person must not operate an aircraft to which this applies in—

(1) any area in which the person's view of the surrounding airspace in which the aircraft will operate is obstructed; or

(2) meteorological conditions that obstruct the person's ability to maintain visual line of sight of the aircraft.

(c) A person who operates an aircraft to which this rule applies must at all times—

(1) maintain visual line of sight with the aircraft; and

- (2) be able to see the surrounding airspace in which the aircraft is operating; and
- (3) operate the aircraft below the cloud base.

(d) For the purposes of this rule visual line of sight means a straight line along which an observer has a clear view and which may be achieved with the use of—

- (1) spectacles, contact lenses, or a similar device used to correct subnormal vision of the user to no better than normal vision but not the use of an electronic, mechanical, electromagnetic, optical, or electro-optical instrument; or
- (2) a first person view system and a trained and competent observer who maintains—
 - (i) visual line of sight of the aircraft; and
 - (ii) sight of the surrounding airspace in which the aircraft is operating; and
 - (iii) direct communication with the person who is operating the aircraft.

1.15 Night operations

A person must not operate a remotely piloted aircraft or free flight model aircraft at night unless the operation is—

- (1) indoors; or
- (2) a shielded operation.

1.17 Right of way

- (a) A person who is operating a remotely piloted aircraft or a control line model aircraft must ensure the aircraft that the person is operating gives way to, and remains clear of, all manned aircraft on the ground and in flight.
- (b) A person who is operating a free flight model aircraft must before launching the aircraft ensure that during the operation the aircraft will remain clear of all manned aircraft on the ground and in flight.

1.19 Aircraft mass limits

- (a) A person must not operate a remotely piloted aircraft, a control line model aircraft or a free flight model aircraft with a gross mass of more than 25 kg.
- (b) A person must not operate a remotely piloted aircraft with a gross mass of between 15 kg and 25 kg unless the aircraft, and any modification made to it, is—
 - (1) constructed under the authority of, or inspected and approved by, an approved person or organisation; and
 - (2) operated under the authority of an approved person or organisation.

Subpart B – Higher Risk Operations

2.1 Person must meet general conditions for an operation under this Subpart

- (a) Before operating a remotely piloted aircraft under this Subpart, a person must
 - (1) make a declaration of their intent to do so in a form acceptable to the Director; and
 - (2) meet all the relevant requirements; and
 - (3) maintain digital flight logs of their operations on Airshare or other forms acceptable to the Director.
- (b) The person must provide details of their digital flight logs to the Director upon the Director's request, in the interest of aviation safety.

2.3 Person must meet specified conditions before operating aircraft within less than prescribed boundaries

(a) Despite clause 1.13(a)(1)(iii), a person may operate a remotely piloted aircraft on or within 2km from the boundary of a heliport if the person –

(1) has successfully completed a training course acceptable to the Director before carrying out the operation.

(b) For shielded operations, a person may operate a remotely piloted aircraft 10m above the prescribed height of a shielded operation if –

- (1) the person has successfully completed a training course acceptable to the Director; and
- (2) the operation stays below the height of the barrier and below 400ft AGL.

2.5 Person must meet specified conditions before operating aircraft over property without consent of occupier or owner

(a) Despite clause 1.17(a)(1)(ii), a person may operate a remotely piloted aircraft over a private property without the consent of the occupier or owner if –

- (1) the person has successfully completed a pilot competency course provided by a training provider acceptable to the Director;
- (2) the aircraft being used has a C-class mark as specified in the applicable Regulation (EU) 2019/945 up to C4 (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/945 - UAS Initial Airworthiness & UAS Third Country Operators | EASA Annex 1 Part 1-5); and
- (3) the operation is not conducted over persons.

(b) Where there is a conflict between paragraph (a) and any other applicable law, the other law prevails.

2.7 Person must meet specified conditions before operating aircraft at night other than indoors or for shielded operations

(a) Despite clause 1.19, a person may operate a remotely piloted aircraft at night other than indoors or for a shielded operation if –

- (1) the person has successfully completed an appropriate night rating course by an organisation certified by the CAA to provide training; and
- (2) the person has successfully conducted a 30-minute shielded operation at night to familiarise themselves with night operations if the person has not flown at night in the previous 90 days; and
- (3) the aircraft is equipped with appropriate lighting to determine its orientation throughout the operation.

2.9 Person must meet specified conditions before carrying out operation beyond visual line of sight

(a) Despite clause 1.17, a person may operate a remotely piloted aircraft beyond visual line of sight if –

- (1) the operation occurs indoors; and
- (2) the operation does not take place over any persons that are not involved in the operation; and
- (3) the person has successfully completed a Part 141 unmanned aircraft course.

(b) For the purposes of this clause, in respect of an operation, **indoors** means the use of a remotely piloted aircraft in circumstances which meet all of the following requirements –

- (1) the remotely piloted aircraft is flown within a building, or another structure, or a naturally occurring or man-made space underground (a containment area);
- (2) the containment area is such that it is physically impossible for the remotely piloted aircraft or model aircraft to fly away during normal, abnormal or emergency operations;
- (3) entry of people to, and exit from, the containment area is controlled in such a way as to not harm a person;
- (4) if a remotely piloted aircraft collides with any part of the containment area, –
 - (i) a person is not injured from the collision; and
 - (ii) no damage is caused to any property outside the containment area.