

Civil Aviation Transport Instrument

CATI: 101-1

**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, and having regard to relevant international standards, guidance and practice, makes this transport instrument under section 431 of the Civil Aviation Act 2023 and Civil Aviation Rule 101.17 for the matters specified under rules 101.11, 101.203, 101.205, 101.207, 101.209, 101.211, 101.213 and 101.215.

Purpose

This transport instrument specifies -

- (1) the obligations and conditions for a person who operates an unmanned aircraft, control line model aircraft and free flight model aircraft; and
- (2) the circumstances under which an aircraft is operated.

Issue of Civil Aviation Transport Instrument

 14 NOVEMBER 2025
Signed by: Kane Patena Date
Director of Civil Aviation

Revision History

Initial Issue	14 NOVEMBER 2025
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Civil Aviation (Operation of an Unmanned Aircraft, Control Line Model Aircraft and Free Flight Model Aircraft) Transport Instrument [CATI 101-1]

Subpart A – General

1.1 Title

This civil aviation transport instrument is the Civil Aviation (Operation of Unmanned Aircraft, Control Line Model Aircraft and Free Flight Model Aircraft) Transport Instrument and may be referred to as CATI 101-1.

1.3 Commencement date

This civil aviation transport instrument comes into force on 22 December 2025.

1.5 Definitions

- (a) The terms used in this transport instrument have the same meaning set out in Parts 1 and 101 of the Civil Aviation Rules:
- (b) If a term is defined in both Parts 1 and 101 (for example **aerodrome**), the definition of the term in Part 101 applies.

Subpart B – Operating conditions and requirements of remotely piloted aircraft, control line model aircraft and free flight model aircraft

2.1 Control line model aircraft

A person must not operate a control line model aircraft under rule 101.203 with a single or multiple wire system longer than 30m.

2.3 Aerodromes

- (a) For the purposes of rule 101.205, 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) any aerodrome, unless the person -
 - (i) 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 rule 101.202); or
 - (ii) 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 (see rule 101.202); or
 - (iii) is the holder of a pilot licence or certificate issued under Part 61 or Part 149; and
 - (2) a controlled aerodrome, unless it is operated in accordance with authorisation from the relevant ATC unit; and
 - (3) an uncontrolled aerodrome, unless -
 - (i) the operation is undertaken in accordance with an agreement with the aerodrome operator; and
 - (ii) for a free flight model aircraft, the aircraft is launched downwind of an active runway; and
 - (iii) for a remotely piloted aircraft -
 - (A) each pilot has an observer in attendance while the aircraft is in flight, responsible for providing additional situational awareness and alerting the pilot to any approaching aircraft; and

- (B) 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.
- (b) Paragraph (a) does not apply to a shielded operation that is conducted -
 - (1) outside of the boundary of the aerodrome; and
 - (2) at a height that is not more than 33 feet above the object being used as a shield; and
 - (3) in airspace that is physically separated from the aerodrome by a barrier that is capable of arresting the flight of the aircraft.
- (c) Paragraph (a)(1) does not apply to a free flight model aircraft.

2.5 Airspace

- (a) Except as provided in paragraph (c), a person -
 - (1) must not operate a remotely piloted aircraft under rule 101.207 -
 - (i) in airspace above persons who have not given consent for the aircraft to operate in that airspace; or
 - (ii) above property where prior consent has not been obtained from the property owner or the person occupying the property; or
 - (iii) at any height above 400 feet above ground level; and
 - (2) must observe the surrounding airspace in which the aircraft is operating for other aircraft.
- (b) Nothing in paragraph (a) requires a person to obtain consent from any person if operating under the authority of an approved organisation in airspace used by that organisation before 1 August 2015.
- (c) A person may operate a remotely piloted aircraft above 400 feet above ground level if -
 - (1) the operation is in a danger area designated for that purpose under Part 71; or
 - (2) the operation -
 - (i) is conducted more than 4 km from the closest point of an aerodrome boundary; and
 - (ii) remains within class G airspace; and
 - (iii) is appropriately notified in accordance with paragraph (d) at least 24 hours before the operation.
- (d) For the purposes of paragraph (c)(2)(iii), an operation is appropriately notified if a person authorised by an approved person or organisation (see rule 101.202), notifies the aeronautical information services provider, for the issue of a NOTAM, of the following information:
 - (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the operator;
 - (2) the location of the proposed operation;
 - (3) the date, time and duration of the proposed operation;
 - (4) the maximum height above ground level proposed for the aircraft operation.

2.7 Controlled airspace

A person who conducts a shielded operation with an unmanned aircraft in controlled airspace under rule 101.11 must not exceed the height of the object being used as a shield by more than 33 feet.

2.9 Visual line of sight operation

- (a) For the purposes of rule 101.209 and this clause -
 - (1) a person must not operate a remotely piloted aircraft or a free flight model aircraft in -
 - (i) any area in which the person's view of the surrounding airspace in which the aircraft will operate is obstructed; or
 - (ii) meteorological conditions that obstruct the person's ability to maintain visual line of sight of the aircraft.
- (b) For the purposes of rule 101.209 and this clause a person who operates a remotely piloted aircraft or free flight model aircraft must at all times -
 - (1) maintain visual line of sight of 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.
- (c) For the purposes of this clause **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.
- (d) Despite clause (a), a person may operate a remotely piloted aircraft beyond visual line of sight if -
 - (1) the operation is performed in an enclosed area where it is physically impossible for the aircraft to escape from the enclosed area; and
 - (2) entry of a person into the enclosed area is controlled in such a way as to ensure the person's safety.

2.11 Night operations

- (a) A person must not operate a remotely piloted aircraft or free flight model aircraft at night under rule 101.211 unless the operation is -
 - (1) indoors; or
 - (2) a shielded operation.
- (b) Despite paragraph (a), a person may operate a remotely piloted aircraft or free flight model aircraft at night if -
 - (1) the person has successfully completed an appropriate course authorised by an organisation approved by the Director to provide night operations training; and
 - (2) the person has successfully conducted a 30-minute shielded operation at night to refamiliarise 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;

and

- (4) the person operates not more than one aircraft at a time.

2.13 Right of way

- (a) A person who operates a remotely piloted aircraft or a control line model aircraft under rule 101.213 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 operates 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.

2.15 Aircraft mass limits

- (a) For the purposes for rule 101.215 and this clause a person must not operate -
- (1) a remotely piloted aircraft, a control line model aircraft or a free flight model aircraft with a gross mass of more than 25 kg; or
- (2) 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 -
- (i) constructed under the authority of, or inspected and approved by, an approved person or organisation (see rule 101.202); and
- (ii) operated under the authority of an approved person or organisation (see rule 101.202).