



DOC's Standardised Drone Operating Conditions

Before you fly your drone

You must:

- Ensure you have a valid drone concession (permit) from the Department of Conservation.
- Ensure you have read, understood, and can comply with these conditions.
- Ensure you have read, understood, and can comply with the [New Zealand Civil Aviation Authority rules](#)¹ for drone operators.

You must ensure you have identified the type of airspace you are operating in, and any additional New Zealand Civil Aviation Rules for operating in that airspace.

You must log your drone flight in AirShare (www.airshare.com). This will help other aircraft operators in the area identify you, and you identify them.

Flying your drone

General Rules

You must:

- Comply with these conditions.
- Comply with the New Zealand Civil Aviation Rules for drone operators.

When flying the drone, you must:

- Ensure you have a copy your drone concession (permit) with you.
- Always see the drone with your own eyes.
- Not fly in cloud or fog.
- Not fly above 120 metres (400 feet) from ground level.

You must cease operation if requested by a uniformed or warranted member of staff of the Department of Conservation.

Interacting with other People

You must keep the drone a safe and reasonable distance from people and buildings/ structures/ utilities.

You must operate the drone away from 'high use' recreational areas where people congregate, such as campsites, campgrounds, huts/ bivvies/ lodges, carparks, and picnic areas.

You must not fly the drone over any person without their consent.

You must not hover (i.e., keep the drone in a continuous position) over any person without their consent.

You must not use the drone to deliberately pursue, harass, or intimidate any person.

Interaction with other Aircraft

¹ <https://www.aviation.govt.nz/drones>



If you encounter piloted aircraft (i.e., helicopters, fixed wing planes, hang gliders) you must give way and land the drone immediately. You must not resume operating the drone until the piloted aircraft has left the area.

If you encounter piloted aircraft (i.e., another drone), you must keep the drone a safe distance from it.

You must not use the drone to pursue, harass, or intimidate any other aircraft.

Interacting with Wildlife

For the purposes of these conditions, 'wildlife' includes any wild animal (i.e., any animal living in a wild state, regardless of whether the animal is native or non-native). 'Wildlife' does not include 'marine mammals' (e.g., dolphins, whales, seals) as defined under the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978.

You may fly the drone near or over wildlife. However, when doing so you must:

- Take off or land at least 100 metres from any wildlife.
- Fly no closer than 50 metres from any wildlife.

You must not fly the drone over roosting/nesting birds.

You must not hover (i.e., keep the drone in a continuous position) over any wildlife.

If any wildlife repeatedly circles and/or engages directly with the drone (i.e., dive bombs), you must land the drone immediately and cease the drone operation.

You must not use the drone to deliberately pursue, harass, or intimidate any wildlife.

Interacting with Marine Mammals

For the purposes of these conditions, 'marine mammals' is as defined under the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978. This includes dolphins, whales, seals and sea lions.

To avoid disturbing or harassing marine mammals you must:

- Fly no closer than 150 metres horizontally from a point directly above any marine mammal.
- Not disturb or harass any marine mammal with your drone (i.e., do not deliberately herd or scatter them).
- Not make any sudden or repeated change in speed or direction.
- Abandon contact at the first sign of any marine mammal being disturbed.
- Take off at least 100 metres from any marine mammal on the shore or the land.

You must not hover (i.e., keep the drone in a continuous position) over any marine mammal.

If the marine mammal appears distressed or disturbed by the drone, you must land the drone immediately and cease the drone operation.

You must not use the drone to deliberately pursue, harass, or intimidate any marine mammal.