Civil Aviation Rules

Notice of Proposed Rule Making
NPRM 25/16/102-23
19 November 2025

Part 102
Unmanned Aircraft Operator Certification and Operation

Consequential Amendments
Nil

Docket 25/16/CAR102-23
2025 Rules Review

Proposed Applicable Date 19 November 2025

Background to the Civil Aviation Rules

The Civil Aviation Rules establish the minimum regulatory safety boundary for participants to gain entry into, operate within, and exit the Papua New Guinea civil aviation system. The Rules as structured in a manner similar to the Civil Aviation Rules of New Zealand and the Federal Aviation Regulations of the USA. Where practicable the Rules also align with the regulatory code of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Australia.

Rules are divided into Parts and each Part contains a series of individual rules which relate to a particular aviation activity.

Advisory Circulars accompany many rule Parts and contain information about standards, practices and procedures that the Director has established to be an Acceptable Means of Compliance (AMC) with the associated rule. An Advisory Circular may also contain guidance material (GM) to facilitate compliance with rule requirements.

The objective of the Civil Aviation Rules system is to strike a balance of responsibility between, on the one hand, the State and regulatory authority, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority of PNG (CASA PNG) and, on the other hand those who provide services and exercise privileges in the civil aviation system. This balance must enable the State and regulatory authority to set standards for, and monitor performance of aviation participants whilst providing the maximum flexibility for the participants to develop their own means of compliance within the safety boundary.

Section 45 of the Civil Aviation Act 2000 prescribes general requirements for participants in the civil aviation system and requires, amongst other things, participants to carry out their activities safely and in accordance with the relevant prescribed safety standards and practices.

Section 72 of the Act allows the Minister to make ordinary rules for any of the following purposes:

(a) The implementation of Papua New Guinea's obligations under the Convention;

(b) To provide for a safe, sustainable, effective and efficient aviation services;

(c) The provision of aviation meteorological services, search and rescue services and civil aviation security programmes and services;

(d) Assisting aviation safety and security, including but not limited to personal security;

(e) Assisting economic development;

(f) Improving access and mobility;

(g) Protecting and promoting public health;

(h) Ensuring environmental sustainability;

(i) Any matter related or reasonably incidental to any of the following:

  (1) The Minister's functions and role under section 8 of the Act;

  (2) The Authority's general objects and functions under section 11 of the Act;

  (3) The Authority's functions in relation to safety under section 12 of the Act; and

  (4) The Director's functions and powers under section of 17 the Act

  (5) The Director's powers under section 52A, 53 and 54 of the Act

(j) Any other matter contemplated by any provision of the Act

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1. Purpose of this NPRM

The purpose of this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking is to put forward for consideration of proposed amendments to Civil Aviation Rule Part 102.

2. Background to the Proposal

2.1 General Summary

These proposed changes are intended to enhance and provide clarity to relevant sections of Part 102.

The proposed amendments are designed to bring greater clarity and enhancement to the existing rules, particularly in relation to unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). One of the key updates involves explicitly including “unmanned aircraft systems” within the rule’s stated purpose, ensuring that all relevant operations are clearly encompassed. Drawing from industry best practices and standards, several new provisions and definitions are being introduced to address the specific needs of UAS and remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) operations.

New definitions are proposed to facilitate better understanding and more precise regulation within this rapidly developing sector. Additional operational requirements are also being put forward to strengthen safety frameworks. These include measures such as prohibiting the flight of remote pilot aircraft over gatherings of people, with a clear definition provided for what constitutes an “assembly of people.” Moreover, the rules introduce alternative measurable distances to clarify operational boundaries, enhancing compliance by specifying distances in both nautical miles and kilometers.

Further enhancements address the overarching safety and operational obligations for remote pilot aircraft, especially for those operating within the Open Category. These new subparagraphs aim to ensure that all such operations are conducted responsibly and within defined safety parameters.

Finally, amendments to the appendices emphasise the responsibilities and competency of remote pilots, recognising that robust safety management depends heavily on both accountability and proficiency in UAS operations. By detailing these obligations and competency requirements, the proposed changes set a higher standard for operational integrity and risk management

2.2 NPRM Development

As a signatory to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Papua New Guinea is committed to aligning its regulations to ICAO SARPS, where practicable. NPRM development is triggered by several key factors. A primary trigger for NPRM is the amendments of various Annexes to the Convention. Additionally, NPRMs may be triggered when internal reviews, audits or accident and incident investigations reveal safety or compliance gaps in existing regulations that could impact aviation safety. Evolving industry best practices and technological advancements play a significant role in driving the need for regulatory updates through NPRMs. The proposed amendments are developed in consultation with internal subject matter experts.

2.3 Key Stakeholders

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority identifies the following as key stakeholders for the proposed rule amendments contained in this NPRM:

(1) The Civil Aviation Safety Authority
(2) The Minister for Transport
(3) The Minister for Civil Aviation
(4) Aviation Document Holders
(5) Other interested stakeholders

3. Consequential Amendments

There are no consequential amendments.

4. Exemptions

There are no current Exemptions against these rules.

5. Impact Assessment

5.1 Safety

This amendment has a positive impact on improving overall safety of airport and aerodrome operations.

5.2 Compliance Cost

There would be negligible cost for the service providers to comply with this amendment.

5.3 Security

This amendment has a positive impact on improving overall security of airport and aerodrome operations in compliance with ICAO Annex 17 requirements.

5.4 Environment

Negligible environmental impact.

5.5 Efficiency and capacity

Implementation will result in efficiency gains and overall positive impact.

5.6 Expected implementation time

Date of publication of final rule.

6. Summary of changes

The proposed amendments include:

New:

- Appendix A: A.3 Added Responsibilities of the remote pilot
- Appendix A: A.4 Added Competency requirements of Remote Pilots
- Rule102.95 Open Category Operations: added paragraph (c), (d), and (e)

Amendments:

- Rule 102.1 Purpose – amended:
- Rule 102.3 – Definitions:

- Rule 102.55 – Standard Operating Conditions
- Rule 102.55 – Standard Operating Conditions
- Rule 102.95 Open Category Operations: New Rule Proposed

Editorial:

- Editorial (inserted hyphen between take off)
- Paragraph (b) and (c) are amended by deleting the word 'and' at the end of the provisions.

7. Legislative Analysis

7.1 Power to Make Rules

The Minister may make ordinary rules under Sections 69, 70, 71 and 72 of the Civil Aviation Act 2000, for various purposes including implementing Papua New Guinea's obligations under the Convention, assisting aviation safety and security, and any matter contemplated under the Act.

These proposed rules are made pursuant to:

(a) Section 69(1)(a) which provides for the Minister to make rules for the implementation of Papua New Guinea's obligations under the Convention;

(b) Section 72(a) which provides for the Minister to make rule for the designation, classification and certification of-

(1) Air services:

(2) Aerodrome operators:

(3) Aviation security providers:

(4) Aviation training organizations"

(5) Aircraft design, manufacture, maintenance and supply organizations:

(6) Air traffic services;

(7) Aviation meteorological services:

(8) Aeronautical communication services:

(9) Aeronautical procedures.

The proposed amendment of Part 102 complies with the requirements of the *Civil Aviation Act and does not contravene the Constitution, the Aerodrome (Business Concession) Act, Civil Aviation (Air Craft Operator Liability) Act, Aircraft Charges Act, Airport Departure Tax Act, the Explosive Act, Firearms Act, Customs Act, Plant and Disease Control Act* and the *Environmental Act.*

The proposed Rule has been checked for language and compliance with the legal conventions of Papua New Guinea.

7.2 Matters to be taken into account

This NPRM is developed in accordance with the primary statutory requirements, including but not limited to those set out in s.2 and s. 75 of the Act and key government policy priorities. The matters taken into consideration include:

7.2.1 Enhancing safety, security, efficiency, and service quality in the civil aviation system in a sustainable manner.

7.2.2 Facilitating access to the air transport network, contributing to the economic and social development of Papua New Guinea.

7.2.3 Establishing rules of operation and responsibilities within the civil aviation system to promote safety and security at a reasonable cost.

7.2.4 Implementing Papua New Guinea's obligations under international aviation and meteorological agreements.

7.2.5 Modernizing and harmonizing regulations with international practice is important.

7.2.6 Ensuring provision of civil aviation and meteorological services and facilities as efficiently and economically as practicable.

7.2.7 Driving sustainability and inclusive national development and

7.2.8 Engaging all stakeholders through transparent policy and rulemaking processes.

8. Submissions on the NPRM

8.1 Submissions are invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule amendment by submitting written data, views, or comments. All submissions will be considered before final action on the proposed rule amendment is taken. If there is a need to make any significant change to the rule requirements in the proposal as a result of the submissions received, then interested persons may be invited to make further submissions.

8.2 Examination of submissions

All submissions will be available in the rules docket for examination by interested persons both before and after the closing date for submissions. A consultation summary will be published with the final rule.

Submissions may be examined by application to the Docket Clerk at the Civil Aviation Safety Authority between 8:30 am and 3:30 pm, on weekdays, except statutory holidays.

8.3 Disclosure

Submitters should note that any information attached to submissions will become part of the docket file and will be available to the public for examination at the Civil Aviation Safety Authority offices.

Submitters should state clearly if there is any information in their submission that is commercially sensitive or for some other reason the submitter does not want the information to be released to other interested parties.

9. How to make submissions

Submissions may be sent by the following methods:

By mail:
Docket Clerk (NPRM 25/16/102-23)
Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea
PO Box 1941
Boroko,
Port Moresby NCD

By delivery:	Docket Clerk (NPRM 25/16/102-23) Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea Morea-Tobo Road Six Mile, Jacksons Airport Port Moresby NCD
By fax:	Docket Clerk (NPRM 25/16/102-23) 3251789 / 325 1919
By email:	Docket Clerk (NPRM 25/16/102-23) rules@casapng.gov.pg

9.1 Final date for submissions

Comments must be received before ***COB, 26th September 2025***

9.2 Availability of the NPRM

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM from the CASA PNG web site: www.casapng.gov.pg

or at a cost from

The Docket Clerk
Civil Aviation Safety Authority Headquarter
Building 1, Level 1
Morea-Tobo Road
Six Mile, Jacksons Airport
Port Moresby NCD

9.3 Further information

For further information, contact:
Gloria Sikre (Ms.)
Acting Manager- Legal Services
CASA PNG
Email: gsikre@casapng.gov.pg

Phone: 325 7571 Mobile: 74127191

Part 102

Unmanned Aircraft Operator Certification and Operation

Subpart A — General

102.1 Purpose

Subject to rule 102.151(a), this Part prescribes rules governing the certification and operation of unmanned aircraft systems and remotely piloted aircraft in Papua New Guinea.

102.5 Definitions

...

'assemblies of people' means gatherings where persons are unable to move away due to the density of the people present;

...

'autonomous operation' means an operation during which an unmanned aircraft operates without the remote pilot being able to intervene;

...

'beyond visual line of sight operation' ('BVLOS') means a type of UAS operation which is not conducted in VLOS;

...

'controlled ground area' means the ground area where the UAS is operated and within which the UAS operator can ensure that only involved persons are present;

...

'direct remote identification' means a system that ensures the local broadcast of information about a unmanned aircraft in operation, including the marking of the unmanned aircraft, so that this information can be obtained without physical access to the unmanned aircraft;

...

'follow-me mode' means a mode of operation of a UAS where the unmanned aircraft constantly follows the remote pilot within a predetermined radius;

...

'geo-awareness' means a function that, based on the data provided by CASA, detects a potential breach of airspace limitations and alerts the remote pilots so that they can take immediate and effective action to prevent that breach;

...

'maximum take-off mass' ('MTOM') means the maximum Unmanned Aircraft mass, including payload and fuel, as defined by the manufacturer or the builder, at which the Unmanned Aircraft can be operated;

...

'model aircraft club or association' means an organisation legally established in for the purpose of conducting leisure flights, air displays, sporting activities or competition activities using UAS;

...

'payload' means instrument, mechanism, equipment, part, apparatus, appurtenance, or accessory, including communications equipment, that is installed in or attached to the aircraft and is not used or intended to be used in operating or controlling an aircraft in flight, and is not part of an airframe, engine, or propeller;

...

'privately built UAS' means a UAS assembled or manufactured for the builder's own use, not including UAS assembled from sets of parts placed on the market as a single ready-to-assemble kit;

...

'robustness' means the property of mitigation measures resulting from combining the safety gain provided by the mitigation measures and the level of assurance and integrity that the safety gain has been achieved;

...

'standard scenario' means a type of UAS operation in the 'specific' category, as defined in Appendix A, for which a precise list of mitigating measures has been identified in such a way that the Director can be satisfied with declarations in which operators declare that they will apply the mitigating measures when executing this type of operation;

...

'UAS geographical zone' means a portion of airspace established by CASA that facilitates, restricts or excludes UAS operations in order to address risks pertaining to safety, privacy, protection of personal data, security or the environment, arising from UAS operations;

uninvolved persons' means persons who are not participating in the UAS operation or who are not aware of the instructions and safety precautions given by the UAS operator;

'unmanned aircraft system operator' ('UAS operator') means any legal or natural person operating or intending to operate one or more UAS

''unmanned sailplane' means an unmanned aircraft that is supported in flight by the dynamic reaction of the air against its fixed lifting surfaces, the free flight of which does not depend on an engine. It may be equipped with an engine to be used in case of emergency.

...

'visual line of sight operation' ('VLOS') means a type of UAS operation in which, the remote pilot is able to maintain continuous unaided visual contact with the unmanned aircraft, allowing the remote pilot to control the flight path of the unmanned aircraft in relation to other aircraft, people and obstacles for the purpose of avoiding collisions;

...

102.55 Standard operating conditions

A remotely piloted aircraft is operated in standard remotely piloted operating conditions if, during the operation—

...

(b)...

(3) over a populated area; or

(4) over assemblies of people;

unless it is a shielded operation;

(i) in a control zone designated under Part 71; or

(ii) within 3 nm or 5km of the aerodrome reference point of a controlled aerodrome; and

...

102.95 Open category operations

A person may conduct remotely piloted aircraft operations as open category operations if that person—

(a) uses a remotely piloted aircraft with a maximum gross mass of up to 10 kg on take-off and throughout the duration of each operation, including all items that are on board or otherwise attached to the aircraft: and

(b) operates the remotely piloted aircraft in accordance with the standard operating conditions prescribed in rule 102.55; and

(c) the remote pilot ensures that the unmanned aircraft is kept at a safe distance from people and that it is not flown over assemblies of people; and

(d) the remote pilot keeps the unmanned aircraft in VLOS at all times except when flying in follow-me mode or when using an unmanned aircraft observer; and

(e) during flight, the unmanned aircraft does not carry dangerous goods and does not drop any material.

...

Appendix A — Requirements for personnel and safety management

…

A.3 Responsibilities of the remote pilot

(a) Before starting an UAS operation, the remote pilot must:

(1) have the appropriate competency in the subcategory of the intended UAS operations to perform its task and carry a proof of competency while operating the UAS; and

(2) obtain updated information relevant to the intended UAS operation about any geographical zones of operation in accordance with CASA published No-Fly-Zones; and

(3) observe the operating environment, check the presence of obstacles and check the presence of any uninvolved person; and

(4) ensure that the UAS is in a condition to safely complete the intended flight, and if applicable, check if the direct remote identification works properly; and

(5) if the UAS is fitted with an additional payload, verify that its mass does not exceed the MTOM defined by the manufacturer or the MTOM limit of its class.

(b) During the flight, the remote pilot must:

(1) not perform duties under the influence of psychoactive substances or alcohol or when it is unfit to perform its tasks due to injury, fatigue, medication, sickness or other causes; and

(2) keep the unmanned aircraft in VLOS and maintain a thorough visual scan of the airspace surrounding the unmanned aircraft in order to avoid any risk of collision with any manned aircraft. The remote pilot shall discontinue the flight if the operation poses a risk to other aircraft, people, animals, environment or property; and

(3) comply with the operational limitations in geographical zones; and

(4) have the ability to maintain control of the unmanned aircraft, except in the case of a lost link or when operating a free-flight unmanned aircraft; and

(5) operate the UAS in accordance with the user's manual provided by the manufacturer, including any applicable limitations; and

(6) comply with the operator's procedures when available.

(c) During the flight, remote pilots and UAS operators shall not fly close to or inside areas where an emergency response effort is ongoing unless they have permission to do so from the responsible emergency response services.

(d) For the purposes of (b)(2), remote pilots may be assisted by an unmanned aircraft observer, situated alongside them, who, by unaided visual observation of the unmanned aircraft, assists the remote pilot in safely conducting the flight. Clear and effective communication shall be established between the remote pilot and the unmanned aircraft observer.

A.4 Competency of remote pilots

(a) Remote pilots operating UAS in the 'open' category shall comply with the competency requirements set in Part A of the Annex; and

(b) Remote pilots operating UAS in the 'specific' category shall comply with the competency requirements set out in the operational authorisation by the competent authority or in the standard scenario defined in Appendix B or as defined by the UAOC and shall have at least the following competencies:

(1) ability to apply operational procedures (normal, contingency and emergency procedures, flight planning, pre-flight and post-flight inspections);

(2) ability to manage aeronautical communication;

(3) manage the unmanned aircraft flight path and automation;

(4) leadership, teamwork and self-management;

(5) problem solving and decision-making;

(6) situational awareness;

(7) workload management;

(8) coordination or handover, as applicable

(c) Remote pilots operating in the framework of model aircraft clubs or associations shall comply with the minimum competency requirements defined in the authorisation granted in accordance with Subpart D.