

CAD launches Electronic Portal for Small Unmanned Aircraft

The Civil Aviation Department (CAD) launched the Electronic Portal for Small Unmanned Aircraft (eSUA) today (May 10). The dedicated platform for small unmanned aircraft (SUA) enables members of the public to register, obtain safety information and get prepared for compliance with new regulations.

To seize the immense potential of SUA application while safeguarding aviation and public safety, the Government introduced a subsidiary legislation, the Small Unmanned Aircraft Order (SUA Order), under the Civil Aviation Ordinance (Cap. 448), as a forward-looking regulatory regime for SUA. Under the new law to be commenced on June 1 this year, SUA operations will be regulated under a risk-based approach and classified according to the weight of the SUA and the operational risk level. Operations of different risk levels will be subject to the corresponding regulatory requirements, including registration and labelling of SUA, registration of remote pilots, training and assessment, equipment, operating requirements and insurance. Under the new regulatory regime, registrations for SUA and remote pilots are required except for standard operations of SUA under Category A1.

The provisions allow a six-month grace period for the public to familiarise themselves with the new requirements and prepare for compliance. The exceptions are offences in relation to endangering acts, restricted flying zones and enforcement which should take effect on June 1 to safeguard aviation and public safety.

The eSUA, being a designated information system under the SUA Order, is a one-stop platform for the public to register and obtain safety information on operation, relevant requirement documents and guidance materials. Members of the public can also refer to the Drone Map on the eSUA for the updated restricted flying zones, and receive notifications of latest safety updates. Designation of restricted flying zones will be gazetted on May 13.

A spokesman for the CAD said, "It is user-friendly and convenient to complete relevant registration processes on the eSUA. Operators are advised to obtain the latest SUA Drone Map and information before they fly SUA to ensure public and aviation safety."

The public can access the eSUA, or find links to download its mobile application, at esua.cad.gov.hk. Members of the public are also encouraged to register within the grace period so as to get prepared for compliance with new regulations.

The CAD launched the SUA Advanced Training Organisation Scheme by the end of last year to provide advanced training courses and assessments for remote pilots conducting higher-risk SUA operations to obtain an Advanced Rating. Experienced remote pilots and individuals who have already gone

through similar training and assessment in other jurisdictions can also apply for an Advanced Rating. As at April this year, about 400 Advanced Rating applications were received.