

Public urged not to operate drones in vicinity of airport

The Civil Aviation Department (CAD) today (September 6) reminded the public not to operate drones in the area of Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and in its vicinity (including within 5 kilometres of the aerodrome) to avoid contravening the law and jeopardising aviation safety.

"We noticed that there are online posts about expressing views at HKIA tomorrow (September 7), in which operating drones in the vicinity of HKIA is mentioned. Drones are classified as aircraft and are governed, as far as aviation safety is concerned, by the civil aviation legislation," a spokesman for the CAD said.

Article 48 of the Air Navigation (Hong Kong) Order 1995 (Cap. 448C) stipulates that a person who recklessly or negligently causes or permits an aircraft (including a drone and a model plane) to endanger any person or property is liable to prosecution, and upon conviction to a fine and to imprisonment for two years.

Moreover, under section 35 of the Airport Authority Bylaw (Cap. 483A), no person shall, within the Bylaw Area, fly a model plane (including a drone). Offenders shall be liable on conviction to a maximum penalty of a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. Under section 3 of the Airport Authority Bylaw, the Bylaw Area shall comprise (i) all the Restricted Area; (ii) all that portion of the Airport Area no part of which is either in the Restricted Area or on any road or length of road; and (iii) all the designated roads, but shall not include any area within an area referred to in (i), (ii) or (iii) which is also within the MTR area.

The CAD also pointed out that shining laser beams at aircraft in flight poses serious risk to aviation safety. According to the Air Navigation (Hong Kong) Order 1995 (Cap. 448C), exhibiting light (including a laser beam) that endangers aircraft is an offence. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a fine.

Furthermore, the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AA) has obtained a High Court order for the continuation of the interim injunction order which restrains persons from unlawfully and wilfully obstructing or interfering with the proper use of HKIA. Any person who neglects to obey or comply with the order, or any person who assists or incites, aids or abets another in disobeying the order, may be held in contempt of court and is liable to imprisonment or a fine. Enforcement proceedings may be taken to compel persons to comply with the order.

"Aviation safety is crucial to the public and the passengers. The CAD and the AA will closely monitor the situation and take appropriate measures and actions to ensure aviation safety," the spokesman said.