

Statement to parliament: Drones: national campaign and extended 'no fly' zone around airports

Today I am setting out the government's [recent action on drones](#), including legislative amendments to the Air Navigation Order 2016 that will be laid before Parliament today (20 February 2019).

Last year, the government legislated to make flying drones above 400ft or within 1km of an airport boundary illegal. This 1km restriction measure was a first step in protecting our airports and aircraft whilst the department gathered further evidence and engaged with stakeholders through our recent consultation.

The highly irresponsible and dangerous disruption caused by drones to flights at Gatwick and Heathrow airports recently highlighted the risks. While the use of drones at Gatwick and Heathrow was already illegal, it is extremely important that regulation provides protection which reduces, as much as possible, the airspace where drones and manned aircraft can come into close proximity with each other. Therefore, the government has decided to extend the restriction zone around airports, [as announced to Parliament in January](#).

The amendment laid today will put into law the extension of the restriction zone around protected aerodromes where drones cannot be flown without permission. The new restriction zone will include an airport's aerodrome traffic zone (ATZ) as well as 5km by 1km extensions from the end of runways to protect take-off and landing paths. All drones will be restricted from flying within this zone unless appropriate permission is granted.

The extended restriction zone will come into force on 13 March this year.

In addition to legislation, it is crucial that the public are aware of the rules on the use of drones, so today we are expanding our national campaign, in partnership with the Civil Aviation Authority, to boost public awareness.

The Department for Transport has today written to airports and local authorities asking them to publicise the new rules and to help to educate passengers and the public about responsible drone use. To help with this, the department is providing a digital tool kit to explain the rules simply and clearly and to promote the Civil Aviation Authority's [Drone Safe campaign](#) and [Drone Code guidance](#). This includes maps detailing the new restriction zones at each individual airport.

The government is preparing a new Drones Bill, which will give police powers to clamp down on those misusing drones and other small unmanned aircraft, including a power to access electronic data stored on drones with a warrant. In addition, the Home Office is also today announcing new stop and search powers for drones around aerodromes, which will also be included in the bill.

These enforcement powers will complement legislation introduced last year which will require the mandatory registration of operators and the online competency testing of remote pilots for drones over 250g. These requirements will become a legal obligation in November this year and work with the new police powers to increase accountability and clamp down on irresponsible and dangerous behaviour.

The Home Office is further reviewing the UK's response to the malicious use of drones, and will consider how best to protect the full range of the UK's critical national infrastructure, as well as testing and evaluating technology to counter drones.

The government will continue to work closely with industry and other partners on regulation, anticipating future innovations wherever possible in order to keep our airports secure and our airspace safe.

These actions will help to combat the misuse of drones, so that small unmanned aircraft can be used safely and securely, and continue to support the development and growth of this rapidly expanding new industry.