

# Isle of Man Ship Registry Technical Advisory Notice

Recommendations for the safe use of drones at sea

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## 1. Introduction

This notice serves to provide guidance for operators on the safe use of Unmanned Ariel Vehicles (commonly known as 'drones') for non-recreational purposes onboard a vessel. Drones can be used to carry out a variety of tasks such as inspections, search and rescue, deliveries and emissions monitoring. Drones can help subvert the need for crew members to carry out dangerous tasks such as entering enclosed or aloft spaces.

## 2. Regulations

There are currently no Regulations issued by the IMO or the Isle of Man Ship Registry for the use of drones' onboard Manx-registered ships. However, it is likely that local regulations applying to the use of drones will be in place. Classification societies may also have recommendations for the safe use of drones for consultation. It is the drone operator's responsibility to be aware of these regulations and comply with them at all times.

## 3. Onboard Procedure for Safe Drone Operation

The IOMSR recommends operators to consider developing an onboard procedure covering the use of drones. This procedure should advise the vessel's crew on best practice for use of drones on board the vessel. The Ship Registry expects that this procedure will differ depending on the intended use of the drone and type of vessel it is operated on. This procedure may be integrated into the vessel's Safety Management System (SMS). The operator should also consider maintenance requirements for the drone (accounting for the manufacturer's instructions) and any requirement to produce a flight plan.

## 4. Risk Assessment

The Ship Registry recommends use of a detailed risk assessment that considers (but is not limited to) the following areas prior to operating a drone:

- Local weather conditions taking into account intended height of operation and visual range of operation
- Proximity to other vessels
- Proximity to aircraft, airports, industrial areas or other restricted air space.
- Proximity to persons (in particular passengers or non-technical crewmembers)
- Vessel-specific risks such as the presence of flammable vapours
- The experience/qualifications of the drone pilot
- Whether an observer is required

## 5. Other Considerations

Operators are recommended to check their insurance coverage for drone usage. In some circumstances, additional insurance may be required. If recording images, operators may wish to consider their data protection policies.

*Please note - The Isle of Man Ship Registry cannot give legal advice. Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel. You should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.*

