

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FLYING A DRONE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

SUMMARY

- **Zimbabwe: Permit required; declare at customs; insurance necessary.**
- **Botswana: Permit required; declare at customs; insurance necessary.**
- **Namibia: Permit required; declare at customs; insurance mandatory.**
- **South Africa: Permit required for commercial use; declare at customs; insurance recommended.**

For all the countries you need to declare your drone at customs when entering the country. Further detailed rules per country:

ZIMBABWE

Flying a drone in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, involves several regulations set by the Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe (CAAZ). Here are the key points you need to know:

1. **Permit and Authorization:** You must obtain a permit from CAAZ and get authorization before flying your drone in Victoria Falls. This permit is valid for three months, after which you need to reapply if you wish to continue flying.
2. **Registration:** Your drone must be registered with CAAZ. This process includes providing details about your drone, such as its make, model, weight, and where you intend to fly it.
3. **Insurance:** You need to have insurance for your drone to cover potential damages or accidents.
4. **Restrictions on Flying:**
 - **Altitude:** Your drone must not fly higher than 120 meters (394 feet) above the ground.
 - **Visibility:** The drone must remain within your visual line of sight at all times.
 - **Prohibited Areas:** Drones cannot be flown near military installations, airports, national parks, or protected areas around Victoria Falls.
 - **Weather:** Flying in poor weather conditions, such as rain, fog, hail, or strong winds, is not allowed.
 - **Night Flying:** Flying a drone at night is prohibited.
5. **Respect for Privacy:** You cannot capture videos or photos of individuals without their consent, which may require flying during less busy hours or being selective about where you shoot.

Failure to comply with these regulations can result in penalties, including fines or imprisonment.

For more detailed information and the necessary forms, you can visit the [CAAZ website](#).

BOTSWANA

Flying a drone in Botswana comes with several regulations to ensure safety and respect for privacy and wildlife. Here are the key rules and restrictions you need to follow:

1. **Registration:** All drones must be registered with the Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana (CAAB) before being operated.
2. **Altitude and Distance:** Drones may not be flown higher than 120 meters (400 feet) above ground level and must remain within 500 meters (1,640 feet) of the pilot.

3. Visual Line of Sight: Drone pilots must maintain a direct visual line of sight with their drone at all times.
4. Age Requirement: Drone pilots must be at least 18 years old.
5. Flight Restrictions:
 - Drones must not be flown within 3 kilometers (2 miles) of any airport.
 - Flying at night is prohibited.
 - Drones must give way to manned aircraft.
 - Only one drone can be operated by a pilot at a time.
6. Restricted Areas: Drones are not allowed to fly over:
 - National game parks and wildlife sanctuaries.
 - Tourism facilities.
 - Public roads and moving vehicles.
 - Near power lines (within 200 meters).
 - Private property without the owner's permission.
 - Government facilities, military bases, police stations, and other sensitive areas.
 - Built-up areas and public gatherings.
 - International boundaries.
7. Special Permissions: To fly in restricted areas, you need to obtain permission from the [CAAB](#). This involves providing details such as the drone's registration number, the reason for the flight, and the date and time of the proposed flight.

For more detailed information, you can visit the [Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana's website](#)

NAMIBIA

Flying a drone in Namibia is permitted, but several regulations must be followed to ensure safety and compliance with local laws.

1. Permissions and Approvals:
 - For drones over 250 grams, you must obtain prior approval from the Namibia Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) before operating a drone, whether for recreational or commercial purposes. Applications for recreational use should be submitted at least 30 days in advance for locals and 60 days for foreigners. For commercial use, the timeframe extends to 90 days for locals and 120 days for foreigners.
2. General Rules:
 - Do not fly higher than 150 feet (approximately 45 meters).
 - Maintain a minimum distance of 5 nautical miles (9.26 km) from airports and heliports.
 - Always keep the drone within your line of sight.
 - Avoid flying over crowds, residential areas, or within 50 meters of people, vehicles, vessels, and structures.
 - You cannot fly drones in national parks or game reserves without prior permission from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism; for private game reserves you need permission from the owners.
 - Respect privacy laws and obtain permission if flying over private property.
3. Insurance:
 - Liability insurance is mandatory for operating a drone in Namibia to cover any potential damages.
4. Special Considerations:
 - Drones weighing less than 250 grams are exempt from registration.
 - It's advisable to avoid flying in bad weather conditions or during nighttime.

For more detailed information and to start the approval process, you can contact the [Namibia Civil Aviation Authority website](#) or email.

SOUTH AFRICA

Flying a drone in South Africa is governed by specific regulations set by the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA). Here are the key rules you need to follow:

General Rules

1. Altitude and Distance:
 - Do not fly higher than 120 meters (400 feet) above ground level.
 - Keep the drone within your visual line of sight at all times.
2. Restricted Areas:
 - Maintain at least 10 kilometers distance from any airport, helipad, or aerodrome.
 - Do not fly in controlled, restricted, or prohibited airspace without prior approval.
 - Avoid flying over national parks, prisons, police stations, military zones, nuclear power plants, courts, crime scenes, and key national points.
3. Proximity to People and Property:
 - Stay at least 50 meters away from people, vehicles, and private property unless you have permission from the property owner.
 - Do not fly over crowds, sports fields, road races, schools, or any social events.
4. Operational Conditions:
 - Only operate drones during daylight and in clear weather conditions.
5. Weight Limit:
 - If your drone weighs more than 7 kilograms, you need a special permit from SACAA.

Commercial Use

- Commercial operators must register their drones and obtain a Remote Pilot License (RPL), an RPAS Operator Certificate (ROC), and an RPA Letter of Approval.
- The licensing process is extensive and includes obtaining a Class 3 or higher Aviation Medical Certificate, passing theoretical exams, and meeting practical training requirements.

Penalties

- Non-compliance with these regulations can result in severe penalties, including fines up to R50,000 (about USD 3,550) or imprisonment for up to 10 years.

Contact and Further Information

For more detailed information and updates, visit the [South African Civil Aviation Authority \(SACAA\) website](#).

Disclaimer: "What you need to know about flying a drone in Southern Africa" covers only the recreational usage of drones. For commercial usage other, much stricter rules and regulations apply. The information in this e-book is correct at the moment of publishing (August 2024).