



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER  
No 6 Convent Place  
Gibraltar**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

No: 650/2014

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2014

### **CONTROL OF SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT**

The growth of the Small Unmanned Aircraft industry has increased rapidly in the past few years and such aircraft, otherwise known as “Quadcopters” or “Octocopters”, are widely available for sale to the general public. The rapid technological development of these devices has made them increasingly popular and has encouraged their use in a large number of commercial and private activities throughout the world.

Although largely advertised as “toys”, Small Unmanned Aircraft, like “radio controlled model aircraft” before them, are considered to be aircraft under the Law and as such there are Civil Aviation Regulations that apply to their use in order to ensure the safety of the general public and property that are not involved in the activity. As such, Small Unmanned Aircraft are prohibited from flying close to Airports, in congested areas, flying close to people or property, flying for commercial gain or flying beyond visual line of sight unless specific permission has been given by the Director of Civil Aviation. Essentially, the person controlling a Small Unmanned Aircraft is fully responsible for the safe operation of any flight.

As all of Gibraltar is considered a highly congested area, Small Unmanned Aircraft cannot be flown in Gibraltar without the permission of the Director of Civil Aviation (DCA). While this may seem somewhat draconian, the aim is to ensure that the general public is not endangered by persons operating them without proper training or awareness of the dangers posed by the activity. To gain the DCA’s permission applicants will be required to prove that they have successfully attended a recognised piloting course, have adequate insurance to cover the activity they are undertaking and have considered, and mitigated, all risks associated with the flight.

The Director of Civil Aviation commented “That while buying such equipment is easy, it must be remembered that a small unmanned aircraft weighing several kilogrammes being flown at several hundred feet above the ground is a potential killer if it is poorly operated and falls to earth! Equally given the proximity of aircraft operating from the Airfield, any activity by Small Unmanned Vehicles must be carefully coordinated to avoid conflict with or

delays to aircraft operating from the Airport. Therefore it is extremely important that anyone considering buying such equipment for use in Gibraltar contacts the Civil Aviation Office at [dca@gibraltar.gov.gi](mailto:dca@gibraltar.gov.gi) to receive advice on the limitations to its use in Gibraltar.”