Department of Media Arts

Policy on using unmanned aircraft or drones for filming

In accordance with the College policy regarding drones:

1. The flying of drones (of any size or weight) for recreational purposes and private use on land either owned or occupied by the College is prohibited.

2. The flying of drones in connection with College business (including research) must be reported to the College at least 3 weeks prior to the planned flight date, or sooner if possible. This also includes situations where the flying of the drone is to be carried out by a third party.

Furthermore, it is a condition of the College's insurance that a risk assessment must be completed for each drone flight, taking into account relevant regulations and permissions.

All enquiries relating to drone use, including the above notification of use should be sent to drones@royalholloway.ac.uk

This Media Arts policy makes provision for the use of unmanned aircraft or drones, either as an aerial camera platform to film sequences, or for any scenes depicting the use of unmanned aircraft, for example model aeroplanes, in sequences being filmed off-campus in unrestricted areas within the United Kingdom.

There is no requirement on any of the Department's academic programmes to include sequences filmed using drones as camera platforms, but in the interests of supporting creativity and engaging storytelling we have produced this policy to enable consideration of requests to include drone footage, or other use of unmanned aircraft in student films, including screen fiction and documentary. This policy also applies to productions engaging third party operators to assist with the filming work.

In all instances, the use and operation of unmanned aircraft and drones must comply with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) legislation and requirements, and the relevant compliance information can be found at:

https://www.caa.co.uk/Consumers/Unmanned-aircraft-and-drones/

This policy is limited to Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA), i.e. those having a mass of 20kg or less, excluding fuel but inclusive of any articles or equipment installed in or attached to the vehicle at the commencement of flight, and the Department is unable to consider requests concerning larger equipment.

It is essential that anyone planning to use an SUA complies with the relevant articles of the Air Navigation Order, specifically:

   Article 241 – endangering safety of any person or property
   Article 94 – small unmanned aircraft
   Article 95 – small unmanned surveillance aircraft

When considering potential film locations where it may be possible to operate such equipment, you can refer to the www.noflydrones.co.uk website to find unrestricted areas, but it is advised that the Drone Assist app is also used to identify operating areas that pose low risk, which gives detailed up to date information about restrictions in the locality. Once chosen, a location recce should be undertaken to assess its suitability for the planned usage and indeed as a film location in general. The recce information must be uploaded to Production Buddy and the production risk assessment must include a specific work method statement covering the operation of the unmanned aircraft or drone. The work method statement must
include the requirement to reassess the operating conditions using the Drone Assist app on the day of the filming, both before setting out and immediately prior to its operation.

If using a third party operator, the production risk assessment documentation include evidence that they hold CAA permission and are currently listed in the CAA publication:

http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?appid=11&mode=detail&id=7078

Recently introduced legislation restricts drones from flying above 400 feet or within one kilometre of airport boundaries. It should also be noted that the UK Government is due to enact new legislation requiring operators of drones weighing 250g or more being required to register with the CAA and for drone pilots to take an online safety test. These requirements will be enforced from 30th November 2019 and it will become necessary to include evidence of such qualification in the production risk assessment documentation.

Public liability insurance

The College Public Liability insurance policy contains the following endorsement:

Drone Endorsement

Section 3, Exclusion 14 is held to be inoperative in respect of unmanned aerial vehicles up to 20kg in weight excluding fuel but inclusive of any articles or equipment installed in or attached to the vehicle at the commencement of flight. Subject to the operator complying with all legislation and licensing regulations. In respect of any Injury, damage or Financial Loss sustained in connection with unmanned aerial vehicles the Limit of Indemnity is reduced to £5,000,000. Costs and Expenses will be payable in addition to the limit of indemnity other than in respect of any claim made or bought:

a) in the United States of America or Canada or territories under their jurisdiction
b) under or in consequence of any judgement or order in or under the laws of the United States of America or Canada or territories under their jurisdiction

Failure to observe the requirements of this policy will be considered by the Head of Department under the College’s disciplinary procedures, and any instances of suspected illegal operation will be referred to the relevant authorities.

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