

Procedure

Remotely Piloted Aircraft – Drone

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to define the mandatory requirements that a Remote Piloted Aircraft (RPA) Access Seeker must satisfy to obtain approval from the Rail Access Provider to operate an RPA for parties other than the Rail Access Provider.

This procedure also outlines the approval process that RPA Access Seekers must follow when seeking permission to operate RPAs within the Defined Rail Corridor managed by the Rail Access Provider

2. Scope

This procedure applies to access requests for or on behalf of external parties to operate RPAs within the Defined Rail Corridor as managed by the Rail Access Provider.

The requirements outlined in this procedure are in addition to those imposed by Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) for RPA operations.

Where CASA requirements differ from this procedure, CASA requirements shall take precedence. No State or Local Laws will override the applicable Drone regulations set out in the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (CASR) 1998 Part 101.

For V/Line specific drone operations required by V/Line staff, please contact your safeworking representative

3. Definitions, acronyms and abbreviations

Definitions, acronyms and abbreviations commonly used throughout this document are provided in the table below.

Table – Definitions, acronyms and abbreviations used in this procedure

Term	Definition
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority.
Drone	An unmanned Aerial Vehicle. Types of Drones Multi-Rotor: The most common consumer type (e.g., quadcopters), featuring multiple rotors used for hovering and aerial photography. Fixed-Wing: Airplane-style drones meant for covering longer distances, often used in mapping or agriculture. Single-Rotor: Similar to traditional helicopters, designed for heavy-lift industrial tasks. Hybrid VTOL: Combines vertical take-off with fixed-wing cruising for longer flight endurance
Defined Rail Corridor	From fence line to fence line, or where there are no fences, 15 metres from the nearest rail

The Danger Zone	All space within three (3) metres horizontally from the nearest rail and any distance above or below these three (3) metres.
Exclusion Zone	You must maintain a horizontal exclusion zone of at least 30 metres away from any person who is not directly involved in the drone's operation. Drones must not be flown directly over or within 30 metres of an area where a group of people is gathered (e.g., beaches, parks, or events).
Rail Access Provider	(V/Line Corporation) - V/Line is the Access Provider in terms of the Victorian Rail Network.
Remotely Piloted Aircraft Operator Certificate (ReOC)	Allows the holder to operate an RPA commercially anywhere in Australia.
RPA	Remote Piloted Aircraft. Can be flown by remote control or they can fly autonomously (independently) through software-controlled flight plans in their computer systems. Flown for business/commercial use
RPA Access Seeker	External parties/RPA operator seeking to operate an RPA in any area managed by the Rail Access Provider
SLA	Service Level Agreement- procedural agreement between Head TfV and V/Line for third party access.
RPA Spotter	Competent employee to monitor RPA flight plan, environmental conditions, and site safety, must be aware of CASA regulations. RPA Spotter is responsible for completing the pre-start checklist, providing any incident reporting and subsequent investigations details. HSE Hazard/Incident Reporting procedure to be used by the Spotter, refer to SAPR-33 in References (Please note the RPA Spotter is NOT a Track Force Protection Co-ordinator – TFPC)
Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)	Commonly referred to as a Drone, these vehicles can either be remotely controlled by an operator or fly autonomously using onboard computers, sensors, and GPS.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Table – Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Director – Freight & Third Party-Access	Accountable

Role	Responsibilities
Corporate Affairs	Consulted
Director Rail Safety & Access	Consulted
RPA Seeker	Responsible for having all required valid documentation

5. Access Requirements

5.1 Safety Obligations

The applicant is **required** to meet all the following requirements. *These represent minimum mandatory obligations and do not constitute an exhaustive list:*

- Drone operations must, where practicable, be conducted:
 - Outside of the Danger Zone (refer to Appendix A)
 - During daylight hours and outside Peak Hours (06:30–10:00 and 15:30–19:00)
 - During an Absolute Occupation
 - Away from stations, special events, and proximity to rail infrastructure
- RPA operations are prohibited during any declared Total Fire Ban
- RPA Access Seeker must be always accompanied by a designated spotter;
- Where operations cannot avoid encroaching into the Danger Zone:
 - Flights must occur outside peak hours (06:30–10:00 and 15:30–19:00)
 - A V/Line endorsed risk assessment and protection plan must be in place.
 - All CASA requirements for RPA operations remain applicable and take precedence;
- Site map to be provided clearly identifying:
 - Exclusion zone(s)
 - Take-off location(s)
 - Flight Path(s)
 - Recovery Site(s)
- Details of proposed safe take off and landing locations must be provided, including flight plan coordinates;
- Flight plans must be prepared in accordance with any applicable emergency services requirements. Including identifying and documenting a suitable emergency landing area;
- Approved RPA operations must cease immediately upon the approach of any train.
- RPA flight path must not traverse an active road;
- Applications presenting potential reputational risk to the organisation must be referred to Corporate Affairs at the application stage;

- The following documentation must be completed and included in the access application:
 - Rail Safety Worksite Hazard Assessment – **SAFO-3576**
 - Risk Assessment specific to the rail environment – **SAFO-81**
- Applicant must notify all relevant local stakeholders who may be impacted including but not limited to:
 - Department of Transport (DoT)
 - Rail Regulatory bodies (RRV/MRPA)
 - Local Government Authorities (LGA)
 - Power distributors

5.2 RPA Access Seeker Application Requirements

The following is a minimum, not exhaustive list of requirements:

- Valid Remote Pilot Licence (RePL) issued by CASA;
- Remotely Piloted Aircraft Operator's Certificate (ReOC) details
- Current insurance details including coverage for Public Liability & aviation insurances;
- Details of RPA including type and any attachments or payloads;
- Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS);
- Clearly defined RPA purpose of access;
- Risk Assessment specific to rail environment;
- Traffic and/or Pedestrian Management plan (where required);
- Evidence of Aircraft airworthiness or manufacturer certification;
- Relevant CASA approvals or permissions where required;
- Pre-start checklist specific to the RPA activity;
- The Access Seeker is responsible for obtaining all required approvals from relevant external agencies prior to undertaking any RPA operations.

5.3 Application Process

5.3.1 External agencies/applicants

5.3.1.1 Submit Access Request

The Access Seeker must submit an access application via the Network Access page on the V/Line corporate website [here](#)

5.3.1.2 Complete Drone Application Form

RPAS Operator must complete the dedicated **Drone Application Form** (available as a pdf on the same page) and attach to the access (TPA) application

5.3.1.3 Fees

The RPAS operator will be advised of any applicable application fees. These must be paid in full before access can be granted.

5.3.1.4 Notice of Intent

The Access Engineer will lodge a **Notice of Intent (NOI)** in the system.

- Where required, the Access Engineer will coordinate approvals from **Train Services** and/or **Corporate Affairs**.

5.3.1.5 Approval and Permit Issue

The RPAS operator must wait for formal approval, which will be issued in the form of a **Site Access Permit (SAP)**.

5.3.1.6 Site Access Permit Compliance

The RPAS operator must always carry the Site Access Permit while undertaking access activities.

5.3.1.7 Post-Access Requirements

Upon completion of access, the RPAS operator must provide any required **reports, feedback, or outcomes** as requested.

6. Legislative and compliance framework

Acts of legislation, regulations or compliance requirements to which this document relates:

Reference	Title
CAR	Civil Aviation Regulations 1988
CASR	Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1988 – Part 101 of CASR Unmanned aircraft and rockets

7. Reference documents

This procedure should be read and applied in conjunction with the following documents:

7.1 V/Line documents

Table – Related V/Line documents

Document ID	Alternate ID	Title
SAFO-81	N/A	V/Line Risk Assessment Tool
SAPR-33	N/A	HSE Incident and Hazard Reporting
SAFO-3576	N/A	Rail Safety Worksite Hazard Assessment 2508
CAMG-2	N/A	Site Access Guide
NOPR-4484	N/A	Network Access Process – Projects
NIFO-2205.1	N/A	Third Party Access Application for use of Remote Piloted Aircraft System – DRONES

7.2 Other documents and standards

Table – Other related documents and standards

Document ID	Title
CASA Website	www.casa.gov.au

8. Document history

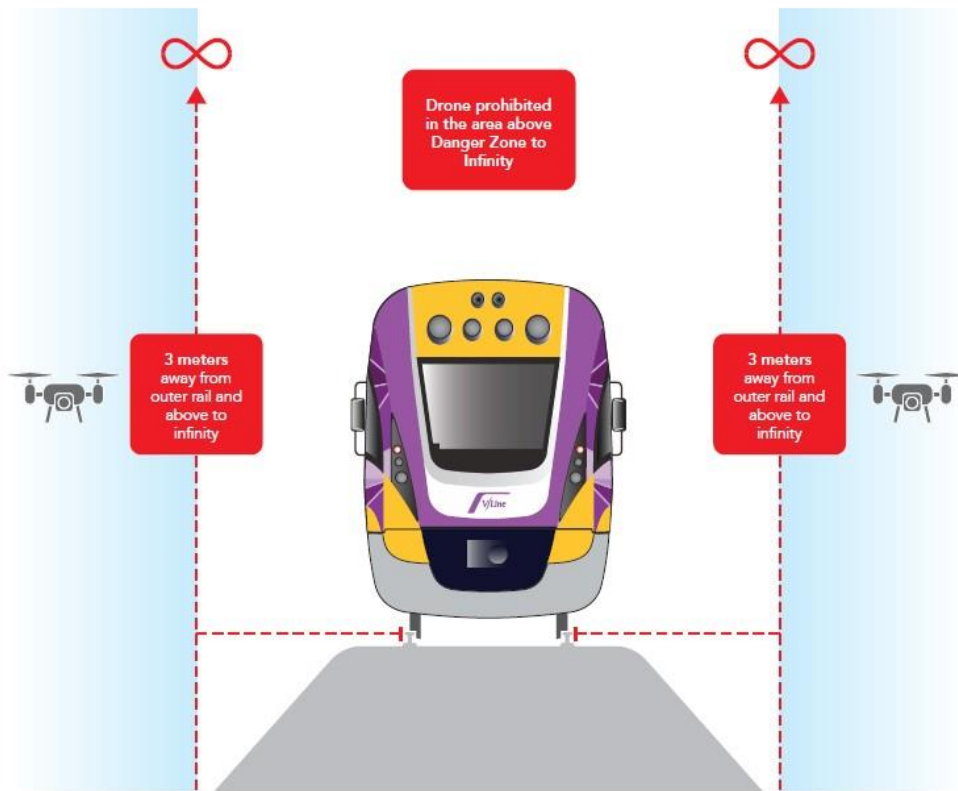
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Appendix A – Danger Zone & Flight Path

A.1 Danger Zone



A.2 Example Flight Path

