



AERO CLUB OF INDIA (NAC-India)
Established: 1927
(Member: Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, Switzerland-NAC-India)

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

FOR DRONE RACING (SPORTING CATEGORY)
FAI-ALIGNED | NASG-ALIGNED | DGCA-INTERFACED

1. Purpose and Regulatory Context

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) establishes the regulatory, safety, and operational framework for Drone Racing as a recognised sporting discipline in India. This SOP is issued by the Aero Club of India (ACI), the National Air Sports Control of India (NAC-India), in alignment with the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) Sporting Code (Drone Racing), the National Air Sports Guidelines (NASG), and applicable provisions of Indian aviation law.

2. Statutory Authority

This SOP is issued under the authority of:

- Article 246 read with Seventh Schedule, Union List Entry 29 of the Constitution of India
- Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhinyam, 2024
- National Air Sports Guidelines (NASG)
- Designation of ACI as National Air Sports Control of India (NAC-India)
- FAI Sporting Code – Drone Racing (FAI-CIAS)

3. Scope of Application

This SOP applies exclusively to Drone Racing conducted as a sporting activity, including:

- Training for drone racing
- National drone racing competitions
- International drone racing events under FAI
- Demonstration and exhibition races
- Participation by Indian and foreign pilots

This SOP does not apply to commercial, surveillance, logistics, or non-sport drone operations.

4. Definitions and Classification

Drone Racing refers to competitive piloting of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) designed for high-speed manoeuvring through defined race courses under visual or first-person-view (FPV) conditions.

Operations are classified as:

- Training / Practice
- National Competition
- International Competition
- Demonstration / Promotional

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Aero Club of India (ACI – NAC-India):

- Apex authority for sporting governance of Drone Racing in India
- Issuance of FAI Sporting Licences
- Event sanction and safety oversight

Event Organisers / Clubs:

- Compliance with this SOP and approved event safety plans
- Technical compliance of drones and race infrastructure

Pilots / Athletes:

- Valid FAI Sporting Licence issued through ACI
- Compliance with safety and competition rules

State Governments / Local Authorities:

- Facilitation and venue support only

DGCA:

- Airspace interface and coordination where applicable

6. Eligibility and Licensing Requirements

- Minimum age as prescribed by ACI
- Valid FAI Sporting Licence issued through ACI
- Completion of ACI-recognised training or qualification criteria
- Compliance with event-specific eligibility rules

7. Drone and Equipment Standards

- Drones compliant with FAI Drone Racing technical specifications
- Power, weight, and propulsion limits as prescribed for the competition
- Fail-safe and disarming mechanisms

- Frequency management and interference control
- Pre-event technical inspection and approval

8. Race Course and Infrastructure Requirements

- Defined race course with safety netting and barriers
- Segregation of pilots, spectators, and officials
- Emergency response and fire safety arrangements
- Crowd control and access management
- Compliance with local safety and public order requirements

9. Operational Procedures

- Pre-race technical and safety briefings
- Controlled launch, race, and recovery procedures
- Race control and marshal responsibilities
- Post-race inspections and results validation

10. Safety Management and Incident Reporting

- Event-specific risk assessment and safety plan
- Immediate response to incidents or loss of control
- Mandatory reporting of accidents and safety breaches to ACI
- Cooperation with safety investigations

11. Event Sanction and International Participation

All drone racing competitions and demonstrations shall require prior sanction from ACI (NAC-India). International participation shall be governed by FAI and ACI protocols.

12. Compliance and Enforcement

Non-compliance with this SOP may result in suspension or withdrawal of event sanction, pilot eligibility, or licences. Serious violations may be escalated to competent authorities as applicable.

13. Review and Amendments

This SOP shall be reviewed periodically by ACI to ensure continued alignment with FAI Sporting Code, national policy, and safety requirements.