

DUAS27

Posted on 04.01.2024 by Rupert Dent

Category: [Drone](#)

Report Title Information not disseminated

Initial Report

Whilst flying over a section of railway for the purpose of undertaking an inspection, we had informed ATC at a particular aerodrome of our requirement to fly in their FRZ. The permission to do so had involved completing a template form and emailing it along with a copy of our OSC approval, insurance certificate and Flyer IDs of the flight crew. This had been done several weeks before the date we were aiming to fly our DJI M300 over the stretch of railway that was within the FRZ.

On finally receiving a verbal approval, but no email to evidence it, we took the precaution of visiting the aerodrome on the day and heading up the tower we obtained approval from the duty controller. Satisfied we had done all that was necessary, we returned to our TOAL site to fly our missions. We were flying at 55m above ground level and were directly under the active runway's climb out route, but around 500m from the departing runway's threshold. Fortunately, we were between two flights, so were on the ground at the time, but a departing flight school aircraft cut its power on climb-out and just before it reached the railway line. It descended rapidly towards where we were going to be flying our next mission before power on the aircraft was restored and it resumed its climb out before turning crosswind. We were relieved that we had chosen that moment to return home for a battery change.

Once we had finished on site and curious to understand why the departing aircraft had chosen to practise an Engine Failure After Take-Off (EFATO) manoeuvre at exactly the spot where we had told ATC we would be flying, we returned to the aerodrome to chat to the duty controller. After some discussion it transpired that even though the controller knew where we were, the information was not being passed on to departing pilots. We all agreed that it would have been wiser to inform departing traffic of the possible sighting of a Drone on climb out, not only for general awareness but also to avoid practising EFATO manoeuvres on departure.

Comment

This is a "first" occurrence of this type, because it involves safety information not being passed on to pilots in circumstances where it might have made a real difference. The Drone pilot had clearly done everything necessary to request approval from ATC to fly in their FRZ, and had received approval, but that is where the information flow then stopped. It isn't clear why the information was

not passed on to pilots, but it seems to CHIRP that there should be a process whereby it is considered relevant information that should be passed on to pilots operating in the zone, even if ATC service being provided was classified as Air to Ground. FRZ's exist amongst other things to make sure that air risk associated with Drone flights is controlled in an area where there is likely to be crewed aircraft flying as well. The information flow does however need to be two way. Crewed aircraft need to be informed about Drones and vice versa. We would be keen to hear from ANSPs what their current practice is with regards to informing crewed aircraft pilots about Drone activities they know about and have authorised in their respective FRZs. In this instance the instructor would presumably have radioed after takeoff that he was about to perform an EFATO, which would have presented an ideal opportunity for the ground controller to respond with information about the presence of a Drone in the extended centreline if that information had not already been passed to the aircraft before its take-off.



