

Liability Cover for Drones

It would be impossible not to have noticed the latest craze in 'gadgets', namely, the increasing proliferation of drones, otherwise known as UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) or RPAS (Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems) or UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) which is being widely reported and featured in all news media worldwide.

We see almost daily reports of their expanding use including:

- aerial photography; aerial surveying & mapping;
- aerial spot spraying;
- TV and media; film production;
- search & rescue; surf life saving;
- live feeds from public & sporting events;
- farming; Department of Conservation;
- electricity lines companies (power line inspections);
- Police and Military.

The relatively sudden upsurge in the world-wide usage of drones has caught aviation regulators on the hop. In most overseas jurisdictions regulators are scrambling to introduce regulatory frameworks.

The position in NZ is that drones are currently being treated as model aircraft. However specific provision for them is currently being promulgated under the Civil Aviation Rules. (We recommend a look at the [CAA website](#) which provides an excellent explanation of the current status).

From the perspective of liability insurance where do drones fit in? In general terms, they don't!

Under Public Liability policies in NZ there is a universal exclusion for claims arising from the "ownership, maintenance, operation, use...of any aircraft". The generally accepted definition of 'aircraft' is: 'any machine or device capable of flight' - drones are unquestionably 'aircraft' and thus are not catered for under run-of-the-mill Public Liability policies.

Uniquely amongst local insurers, Vero Liability can fill this gap.

VL can underwrite Hull Liability insurance for light aircraft INCLUDING drones.

- This facility is available through an exclusive arrangement with the [Aviation Co-op](#) (Aviation Co-operating Underwriters Ltd)
- The cover available in broad terms equates to a motor vehicle third party cover (see the [Wording](#) - Section 2 only).
- The cover limit is \$1,000,000 with a nominal \$500 excess for straightforward risks.
- Cover applies for both recreational or commercial use.
- Premium depends on risk profile but you will be surprised at how inexpensive it will be.
- A separate Aerial Application policy is available for aerial spraying.

In addition to these exclusive aviation liability policies, VL's LegalEdge package may well be appropriate and will be adapted for drone owner/operators who may, in particular, see the benefit of:

- Ground risks Public Liability with Punitive & Exemplary Damages Extension;
- Statutory Liability cover for potential exposures under the Civil Aviation, Privacy, Resource Management and Health & Safety Acts.

For further information or a quotation, please contact your usual VL [Underwriter](#) or VL's Aviation Liability specialist Ian Thompson, 09 354 9643 | 021 346 715 ian_thompson@veroliability.co.nz.