

VO

Your drone may be small – but it can create a big hazard.

That’s why aviation rules say drones must not fly anywhere near aircraft taking off or landing.

That means staying at least 4 kilometres away from any airport or aerodrome, including helipads at hospitals or those used for sightseeing operations.

But what’s known as “controlled airspace” can go well beyond those 4ks around airports.

So, before you launch your drone, check the area you’re planning to fly in.

The map on airshare.co.nz shows the controlled airspace within New Zealand.

...If your backyard is inside that controlled airspace, these rules apply there too.

You may be able to fly a drone in controlled airspace if you log your intended flight details on airshare.co.nz and ask Air Traffic Control for clearance.

But there is a way you can fly your drone safely without that clearance.

It’s by doing what’s called a “shielded operation”.

That means you fly your drone near and below the height of an object that shields your drone from other aircraft.

The shielding object could be a building, a tree, or even your house.

You must only fly your drone within a 100m zone around that object, and never above the object’s height.

That way your drone is less likely to get in the way of another aircraft.

If you’re flying a shielded operation within 4 kilometres of an airport or aerodrome – so where there are likely to be quite a few aircraft – you must also have a physical *barrier* between your drone and the airport.

Whatever the barrier is, it must be solid enough to stop your drone straying into the path of other aircraft, should you lose control.

Keep your drone below the height of the barrier *and* the shielding object so there's no danger of the drone getting in an aircraft's way.

Doing a shielded operation also means you can safely fly your drone at night – something that's not usually allowed.

Another thing to think about, before you do a shielded operation turn off any obstacle avoidance features as these might make your drone automatically fly up and over your barrier.

You can get training to fly a shielded operation safely – go to the drones page on the CAA website for info.

Finally, wherever and whenever you're flying, if you see another aircraft, always get your drone out of the way and land immediately.

If you need any more information, or even just want to check something, we're here to help.

Get in touch, visit flyyourdrone.nz for more safety tips, or follow flyyourdrone on Facebook.

Consider others, be responsible – that's how you fly the right way.