

# Drone Pilot

Drone pilots remotely operate aircraft used in work like surveying, filmmaking, protective services and aerial photography.

## ANNUAL SALARY

### variable

Average UK salary in 2020 was £30,378  
(source Office for National Statistics)

## WORKING HOURS

### 39 to 41 variable

You could work: freelance / self-employed; as customers demand

**+2%**

## FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

There will be 2% more Drone pilot jobs in 2025.  
[In your local area](#)



## What's it all about?

### What you'll do

### Day to day tasks

As a commercial drone pilot, you'll:

- plan flight paths
- test flight equipment
- carry out aerial surveys
- gather digital images and data
- maintain and repair drones
- produce maps based on flight data
- work with other professionals to interpret data

### Working environment

You could work on a film set, on a construction site, in the countryside or in a control room.

Your working environment may be outdoors in all weathers and you may spend nights away from home.

## Entry requirements

You can get into this job through:

- applying directly
- specialist courses run by private training organisations
- future plans for L3 and 4 courses as well as degree study

### Direct application

You can apply for jobs directly. Most employers will expect you to have experience of flying drones, with at least 40 hours of recorded flying time.

### Other routes

You could complete training approved by the [Civil Aviation Authority](#). This lasts between 2 and 4 days and includes:

- UK air regulations
- flight safety
- flight planning
- theory test and practical flight skills assessment

You'll also have to write an operations manual describing how you are going to use your drone commercially.

After successfully completing training, you can apply for the Permission for Commercial Operations certificate, which you need to fly drones for commercial purposes.

You must renew the certificate every 12 months.

## Requirements and restrictions

You'll need to:

- hold a [Permission for Commercial Operations](#) certificate

## More information

### Career tips

You'll have to join the armed forces or the police and train as an aerial vehicle pilot to operate drones for military or security purposes.

### Further information

You can get more advice about working and training as a drone pilot from [Dronesafe](#) and the [Civil Aviation Authority](#).

## Employment by region

Region	Jobs
Yorkshire and the Humber	5,004
London	41,161

<b>Region</b>	<b>Jobs</b>
South West	6,191
South East	14,583
Wales	2,090
Scotland	4,264
West Midlands	5,558
North West	6,641
North East	1,631
East of England	8,668
Northern Ireland	1,273
East Midlands	5,216

## **Career path and progression**

You may be able to complete a qualification like the Level 3 Certificate and Level 4 Diploma in the Remote Piloting of Unmanned Aircraft Systems.

Examples of work you might do includes: filmmaking, TV and marketing; weather forecasting; mapping land use for farming or archaeological work; inspecting infrastructure like bridges and tall buildings; surveying air accident sites as part of investigations.

If you have engineering qualifications, you could move into drone design and development work.

## **Other useful information**

The demand for drone operators is growing fast. Amazon have drones working in their warehouses and are hoping to launch unmanned deliveries to homes soon. Drone operating skills could be a useful qualification to get in the future as it will be useful in many job sectors from computer games to conservation.

You can get more advice about working and training as a drone pilot from [Dronesafe](#) and the [Civil Aviation Authority](#).