

PROCESS MEMO – Flight Tests

1. Introduction

Payerne Airport offers a secure and flexible environment for conducting flight tests and technology trials, in particular for drones and autonomous systems. The tests may take place on various aerodrome infrastructures (runway, tarmac, taxiway, outdoor surfaces) or in the technology park, all within the controlled airspace of the Payerne CTR.

In order to guarantee the safety of civil and military air operations as well as regulatory compliance, any company wishing to carry out tests must follow a preparation and acceptance process coordinated with the civil aerodrome, the competent authorities and the air navigation services.

POC swiss aeropole (civil aerodrome chief:

Didier Callmander

didier.callmander@swissaeropole.com

079 622 59 23

2. First step: initial contact and presentation meeting

Before any operational planning, the company must contact swiss aeropole in order to arrange a presentation meeting.

This first meeting is an opportunity to present the project and to clarify several essential elements:

- the expectations and needs of the parties
- the type of drone or aircraft used
- the objectives of the tests
- the intended test area
- the altitude and mission profile
- the infrastructure required on site
- whether or not airspace activation is required
- the need for technical or regulatory assistance

This step also allows for an initial feasibility analysis and for identifying the regulatory steps required before the tests are carried out.

At the end of this first phase, a proposal including the pricing conditions will be presented to the operator.

3. Verification of the regulatory framework

Operators must verify which regulatory category their operation falls into according to the regulations applicable to drones.

More information on the website of [the Federal Office of Civil Aviation FOCA](#).

If the operation complies with the requirements of the OPEN category (for example, a drone of less than 25 kg, visual line-of-sight flight, altitude below 120 m AGL and compliance with the safety rules), no prior authorisation from FOCA is required. However, local coordination and an airspace use request remain mandatory at Payerne due to the presence of controlled airspace.

If the operation does not meet the criteria of the OPEN category, it falls under the SPECIFIC category. In this case, the operator must carry out a risk analysis according to the SORA methodology and obtain, where applicable, authorisation from FOCA before the tests are carried out. It is recommended to contact FOCA sufficiently early in the project preparation process.

The swiss aeropole community includes several companies active in consulting related to drone operations:

- [Digisky](#)
- [Twenty H](#)
- [UASolutions](#)
- [Vertical Master](#)

4. Project acceptance process at Payerne

Once the project has been presented, swiss aeropole carries out an initial analysis in order to determine whether the project requires a formal assessment.

- A. If the project is simple and does not require an in-depth risk analysis, swiss aeropole informs the military authority and a validation will be sent to the operator as soon as possible.
- B. If the project requires a more detailed analysis, a risk assessment according to the SORA methodology will be requested. Depending on the case, authorisation from FOCA may also be necessary. Consultations may also be carried out with the relevant partners, in particular the military authority and the air navigation services.

Once the validations have been obtained, the operator may proceed with the steps necessary to carry out the flight.

In some cases, a project may be deemed inadmissible for reasons of safety or of incompatibility with mixed civil and military operations. In this case, adaptations to the project may be proposed.

swiss aeropole and the competent authorities reserve the right to accept or refuse a project for reasons of safety, operations or aeronautical coordination. No detailed justification needs necessarily be provided to the operator.

Final acceptance of the project is also conditional upon the submission of a valid operator third-party liability (TPL) insurance certificate covering the planned activity. No activity may be planned in the SFO Tool without this certificate.

5. Airspace use request ([SFO Tool](#))

All drone flights in the Payerne CTR must be coordinated via the Skyguide Special Flight Office ([SFO Tool](#)) platform.

The procedure takes place in two steps.

5.1. Creating a *Request*

The operator must submit a Request in the SFO Tool at least 10 working days before the first planned activity.

This Request describes the general parameters of the operation (flight area, altitude, period, type of aircraft and operator contact details) and allows Skyguide to assess the feasibility of the activity.

At Payerne, the period covered by a Request must not exceed one week.

Once the Request has been analysed and validated, the operator may create flight activities.

5.2. Creating the *Activities*

The Activities correspond to the individual flights planned within the framework of the Request. They must be created in the SFO Tool no later than 12:00 (LT) on the working day preceding the activity.

The parameters of the Activity must remain within the limits defined in the Request (area, altitude, period).

5.3. Operational authorisation

Before the activity begins, the operator must contact the competent ATC unit by telephone in order to obtain the final flight clearance.¹

The announcement in the SFO Tool does not constitute a take-off clearance.

In the event of an emergency departure of fighter aircraft, drone operations must be stopped immediately. The POC will be contacted by the ATC unit if this is triggered.

The drone must be on the ground within 5 minutes of the call.

5.4. Operator responsibility

The operator remains at all times solely responsible for the preparation, conduct and safety of its flight operations, as well as for compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements, in particular those issued by FOCA and the air navigation services.

¹ The instructions communicated within the framework of the authorisation issued via Skyguide's SFO Tool prevail over the general guidance set out in this document

The operator is required to comply strictly with the authorisations issued, the operational limitations and the instructions transmitted via the SFO Tool and by the ATC units.

swiss aeropole SA provides a testing framework and facilitates coordination with the stakeholders, but assumes no responsibility in connection with the execution of the flights or the operator's non-compliance with the regulatory requirements.

6. Procedure in the event of an incident / accident

For detailed and the complete procedure, refer to the SECURITY MEMO.

Any incident related to drone operations (collision, fly-away, loss of link, crash or danger to persons/infrastructure) must be reported immediately.

The operator contacts without delay:

Control Tower Supervisor / emergency triggering	044 823 61 13
Civil airport authority	026 662 66 70

The operator provides the following information: nature of the event, position of the drone, last known altitude and estimated direction/trajectory.

The air base's emergency services handle emergencies at the airport.

After the event, the operator must cooperate with the airport authority and draw up a civil incident report in accordance with the applicable procedures.

7. Typical timeline for preparing drone flight tests

The preparation of flight tests at Payerne is part of a multi-phase planning process involving swiss aeropole, the civil airport authority, the military authority and Skyguide Air Navigation Services.

D-20 | Strategic planning

- Initial presentation of the project / kick-off meeting with swiss aeropole
- Definition of the concept of operations (CONOPS)
- Preliminary feasibility assessment (airspace, infrastructure, safety)
- Identification of the test areas (runway, taxiway, greenfield site or dedicated airspace)
- Review of the regulatory documentation if necessary (for example, flight authorisation, SORA / operational authorisation)
- Provide the valid operator TPL insurance certificate
- Preparation of the test campaign plan and the quotation

D-10 | Pre-operational coordination

- Assessment of the integration into the airspace with Skyguide (swiss aeropole)
- Consultation of the military authorities if necessary (swiss aeropole)
- Definition of the operational time slots and coordination with the air navigation services (swiss aeropole)

- Submission of the special flight request via Skyguide's SFO tool

D-1, 12:00, local time

- Creation and submission of individual SFO activities (flight announcements)

D-Day | Tactical phase

- Operational coordination with air traffic control (ATC) and the airport authorities;
- Final ATC authorisation before the activity (call before the flight);
- Conduct of the flight tests;
- On-site operational support if necessary

After the flight | Operational follow-up

- Operational report
- Safety and operational feedback / lessons learned to be transmitted to swiss aeropole
- Administrative follow-up and invoicing

The timeframe may vary depending on the complexity of the project, the regulatory requirements and the constraints related to the airspace. For example, if authorisation from FOCA or a complex SORA is required, this timeframe could exceed 1 to 1.5 months.

8. Financial conditions and packages

swiss aeropole's services are offered in the form of packages, including preparation, coordination as well as access to infrastructure and operational support.

The packages presented below are offered for guidance only. The pricing conditions may vary depending on the project, the level of complexity and the client's status (in particular for resident companies).

Initial setup and coordination

- Preparation for and participation in the initial meeting
- Local support and coordination
- Operational and technical analysis
- Definition of the scope and alignment of the testing needs

Test Day – Small Package

- Access to the test area
- Support during the test day
- Access to basic facilities (toilets & kitchenette)
- Parking

Test Day – Medium Package

- Access to the test area
- Support during the test day
- Access to basic facilities (toilets & kitchenette)
- Parking
- Access to a meeting room for the day (up to 8 people)

Test Day – Large Package

- Access to the test area
- Support during the test day
- Access to basic facilities (toilets & kitchenette)
- Parking
- Access to the Failloubaz meeting room for the day (up to 60 people)

Test Day – Off-site package

- Remote operational support during the test day
- Site support available on request



9. Checklist

Before carrying out a test campaign at Payerne, operators must follow the steps below and provide the necessary documents:

Project preparation

- ☐ Contact swiss aeropole to arrange a kick-off meeting
- ☐ Present the concept of operations (CONOPS) and the objectives of the tests
- ☐ Define the test area, the altitude and the mission profile
- ☐ Identify the infrastructure needs (storage, tarmac, greenfield, GCS, power, etc.)

Regulatory verification

- ☐ Determine the regulatory category of the operation (OPEN or SPECIFIC)
- ☐ If necessary: prepare an internal or external SORA analysis
- ☐ Obtain FOCA authorisation / Permit to Fly if applicable
- ☐ Provide the valid operator TPL insurance certificate
- ☐ Read and apply the SECURTIY MEMO instructions (especially kill switch / fly away event)

Local validation

- ☐ Submit the project to the civil aerodrome chief (POC) for feasibility analysis
- ☐ swiss aeropole coordination with the air base and skyguide

Airspace coordination

- ☐ If the project requires airspace activation, mention this specifically in the request
- ☐ Create a Request in the SFO Tool (≥ 10 working days before the activity, max. duration 1 week at Payerne)
- ☐ Create the Activities corresponding to the planned flights (no later than 12:00 LT on the preceding working day)

Operations

- ☐ Final coordination by telephone with ATC just before the flight
- ☐ Conduct the tests in accordance with the authorisations obtained
- ☐ Debriefing and feedback after the test campaign

10. Hotels

B&B de Lully

Location: Estavayer-le-Lac motorway exit

To benefit from the preferential rate, you can:

- by telephone: mention swiss aeropole
- by e-mail: write to swiss aeropole
- on the website: <https://www.hotel-bb.com/en/hotel/lully-3-lakes> enter the promo code SWISSAEROP

Package:

- standard single room: CHF 115.- (breakfast incl.)
- standard double room: CHF 130.- (breakfast incl.)

Cancellation free of charge until 18:00 on the day of arrival.

Wifi and parking: free