

Drones, fireworks, toy balloons and sky lanterns near Manchester Airport

Drones, fireworks, toy balloons and sky lanterns can be dangerous to aircraft.

Drones provide a new angle on the world and are fun to operate. Fireworks, balloons and lanterns are used throughout the year to celebrate New Year, birthdays, religious holidays, festivals, concerts and other festivities. Firework displays and balloon or lantern releases can be used to collect money for charity, provide entertainment and give pleasure to millions each year.



Drones

The newest generation of drones can fly thousands of feet above the ground and, if used near an airport, could stray into the path of aircraft. A drone suddenly appearing in the path of an aircraft could not be avoided, and if struck or sucked into an engine, could cause serious damage to the aircraft.



Fireworks

Many fireworks fire several hundred feet into the air and, when used near an airport, there is the possibility that they could explode in the path of or near to an aircraft. This could cause danger by dazzling and distracting pilots.



Sky lanterns

Sky lanterns (sometimes known as Chinese lanterns) vary in size and performance. When released they can travel a considerable distance at unpredictable heights. Lanterns pose a risk to aircraft if they are sucked into an engine. Debris from sky lanterns can also cause damage to aircraft engines, tyres and fuselage if they land on or near the runway or areas where aircraft manoeuvre.

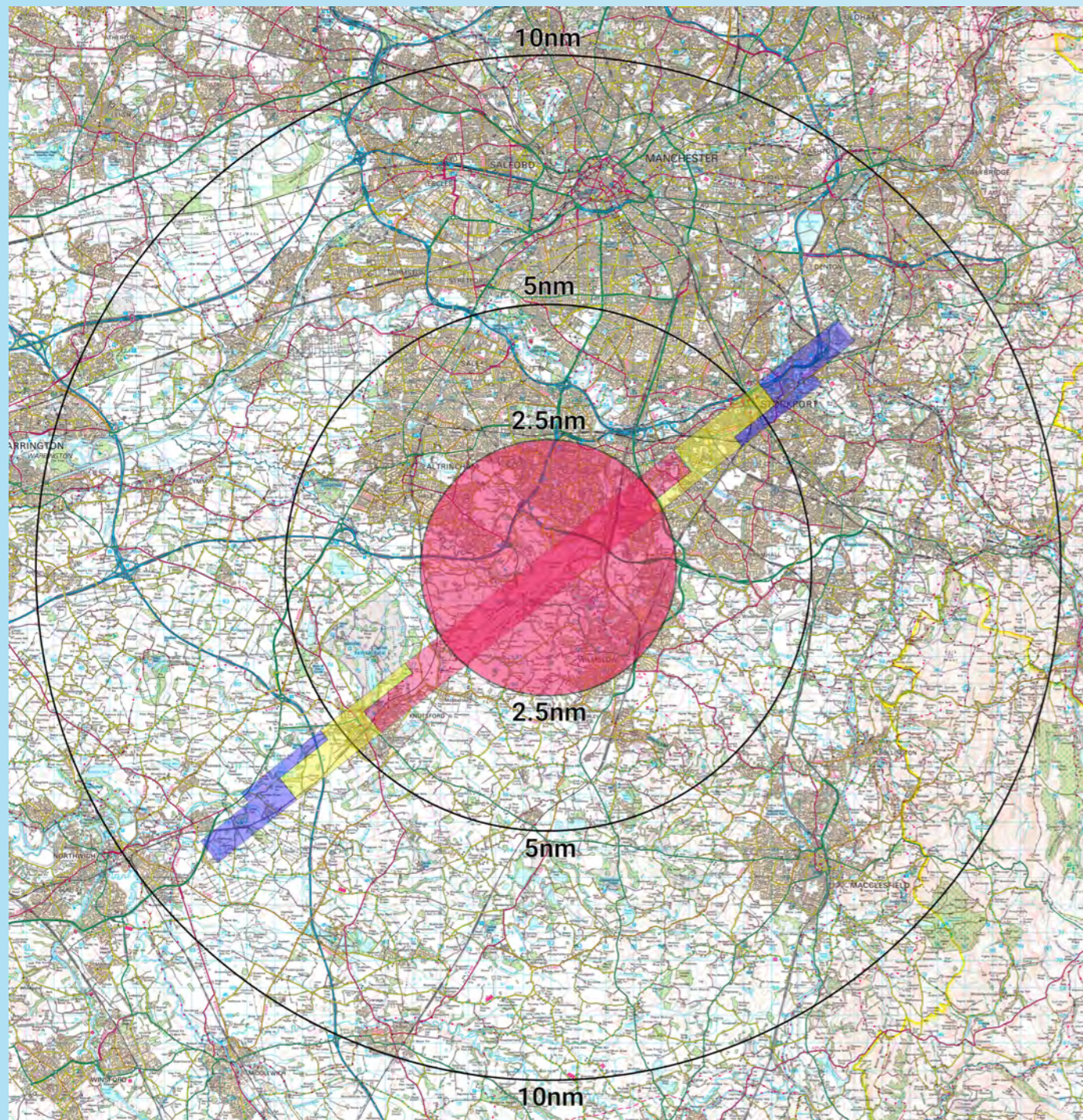


Toy balloons

Toy balloons, particularly if released in large numbers, could damage aircraft engines and cause aircraft to have to divert from their flightpath to fly around them. Foil balloons can also interfere with radar and navigation systems.

We have prepared this booklet to give you advice on how you can enjoy drones, fireworks, balloons and sky lanterns responsibly without risking the safety of flight crew and passengers. If you are piloting a drone, organising a display or release, or are intending to use fireworks, sky lanterns or balloons close to Manchester Airport, please read this booklet carefully.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact us using the details on the back page.



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Firework displays near Manchester Airport

Closeness to airport	Domestic display	Professional display
Within 1.1 miles either side of Manchester Airport or its flightpaths, or up to three miles beneath the flightpaths of Manchester Airport (See the areas coloured red on map.)	You can safely use ground-based fireworks that are designed to cause no injuries to people within five metres. You must not use rockets, mortars or fireworks that shoot up into the sky.	Displays must be arranged with Manchester Airport.
Within three to five miles of Manchester Airport and underneath its flightpaths (See the areas coloured yellow on map.)	You can safely use ground-based fireworks that are designed to cause no injuries to people within 25 metres. You must not use rockets, mortars or fireworks that shoot up into the sky.	No fireworks must shoot up higher than 200 feet, unless you have permission from Manchester Airport.
Within five to seven miles of Manchester Airport and underneath its flightpaths (See the areas coloured purple on map.)	You can safely use standard domestic fireworks.	No fireworks must shoot up higher than 800 feet, unless you have permission from Manchester Airport.
Within seven to 10 miles of Manchester Airport and underneath its flightpaths	You can safely use standard domestic fireworks.	No fireworks must shoot up higher than 1000 feet, unless you have permission from Manchester Airport.

Piloting a drone near Manchester Airport



The Civil Aviation Authority has imposed a Flight Restricted Zone (FRZ) for Drones around Manchester Airport. It is illegal to fly any drone within the Manchester Airport FRZ unless you have permission from Air Traffic Control at the airport. The FRZ is made up of a 2.5 nautical mile radius; and then a 5 kilometre by 1-kilometre zone starting from the point known as the 'threshold' at the end of each of Manchester's runways. Both zones extend vertically upwards to a height of 2,000 feet above the airfield (see the map to the left). More details can be found at <https://dronesafe.uk/>

Requests to fly a Drone within the Manchester Airport FRZ can be made to the NATS Non-Standard Flight Applications website at <https://nsf.nats.aero/> It should be noted that "Blanket operating requests" or long term operating approvals are not yet feasible in the FRZ.

Before piloting a drone, you should download and register with the 'Drone Assist' app (for free) from the Apple or Android app stores. This app will help you decide where it is safe to fly.

Always follow the drone code.

- Always keep your drone in direct sight.
- Never fly more than 400ft (120m) above the surface and stay well away from aircraft, airports and airfields.
- Never fly closer than 50m to people. Even when your drone is more than 50m away from people it is safer to avoid directly overflying them.
- Never fly closer than 50m to buildings, cars, trains or boats
- Never fly closer than 150m to a crowd of 1,000 people or more. Never fly directly over a crowd.
- Never fly closer than 150m to built-up areas. Never fly directly over a built-up area
- Never fly in an airport's flight restriction zone.
- It is illegal to fly a drone or model aircraft between 250g-20kg that does not show a valid operator ID.

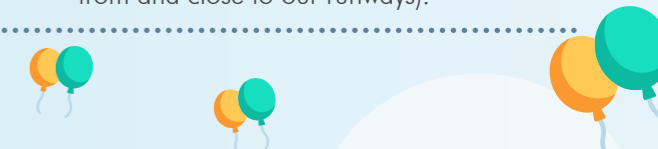
Releasing sky lanterns near Manchester Airport



The Civil Aviation Authority clearly states that sky lanterns should not be released within 10 nautical miles of any airport without permission from the airport itself. There is a radius of 10 nautical miles drawn on the map to the left. It is not safe to release lanterns from sites within this area. Any individual or group releasing more than ten sky lanterns should contact the CAA prior to release. Any individual or group releasing ten sky lanterns or less should contact the airport.

Beyond 10 nautical miles you should think carefully before releasing lanterns. In the right weather conditions, they can climb thousands of feet and travel many miles. In the air, sky lanterns can cause a significant risk to aircraft. When they land, sky lanterns cause debris that may harm wildlife or aircraft engines (many are recovered from and close to our runways).

Releasing balloons near Manchester Airport



A radius of five nautical miles is shown on the map to the left. If you intend to release the balloons within this area, you will need to contact us (using the information on the back page).

You will need to tell us:

- the address you want to release the balloons from;
- the number of balloons you want to release;
- the size of the balloons and what they are made of; and the time and date of the proposed event.

We will then tell you whether or not it would be safe to release the balloons. It may be that you are given a 'conditional clearance'.

The CAA provides advice that Balloons should be made of latex, not metallic foil, and must not have a metallic finish. It is strongly recommended that plastic inserts are not used to close the balloons, nor lengths of string, streamers or ribbons; the balloons are not to be tied together. Where the balloons are restrained prior to release, the restraining medium must be attached to the ground or a fixed structure to prevent any inadvertent release of the restraining medium with the balloons.



We receive many requests to change or suspend flights to allow firework displays to take place.

Unfortunately, this is difficult to arrange and often not possible. In the United Kingdom, fireworks are traditionally used to commemorate Bonfire Night on and around 5 November.

To allow residents close by to hold firework displays for bonfire night, flights will be suspended between 8.15pm and 8.30pm on:

- Thursday 5th and Saturday 7th November 2026.
- Friday 5th and Saturday 6th November 2027.

You must plan your displays within this time period. If you intend to hold a display, you must let us know the location of your display and the contact details of a responsible person. We will publish the dates and times of future suspensions on our website.

Why should I follow these rules?

Drones and fireworks can be dangerous if they are used inappropriately. Sky lanterns and balloon releases pose a risk to those on the ground and a serious danger to aircraft. The police take this matter very seriously.

If you do not follow the rules set out in this booklet, you may be charged with 'Endangering the safety of an aircraft', for which you could be sentenced to up to five years.

For more information, or if you have any questions, contact:

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Website 🌐 manchesterairport.co.uk/community

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