



High-altitude Vehicle Non-Deployable Payloads: Operational Policy

1.1 Purpose of this document

This is the New Zealand Space Agency (**NZSA**) policy which sets out the approach that will be taken when assessing non-deployable payloads carried by high-altitude vehicles (HAVs) as part of applications made under the Outer Space and High-altitude Activities Act 2017 (**the Act**) and in accordance with the Outer Space and High-altitude Activities (Licences and Permits) Regulations 2017 (**the Regulations**).

1.2 When to apply this policy

This policy will be applied when assessing applications for high-altitude licences for operators carrying payloads.

1.3 Relevant sections in the Act and Regulations

Under the Act, it is a condition of a high-altitude licence that the licensee provide information about any high-altitude payload to be carried by a high-altitude vehicle under the licence. The relevant sections in the Act are:

- + [46](#): *Application for high-altitude licence*
- + [48](#): *Conditions and insurance relating to high-altitude licence*

The relevant sections in the Regulations are:

- + [Schedule 6 Part 1](#): *Information required in relation to each high-altitude vehicle*

1.4 Policy intent

The intent of this policy is to manage the operation of non-deployable payloads carried by high-altitude vehicles (HAVs) through imposing licence conditions on high-altitude licence holders.

Under the Act, a high-altitude licence is required for any vehicle that travels, intends to travel, or is capable of travelling to an altitude above the higher of flight level 600 (60,000 feet) or the upper limit of controlled airspace under the Civil Aviation Act 1990.

Non-deployable high-altitude payloads do not require separate authorisation. Adding a new payload to a licensed HAV would typically require the licence holder to apply for a variation to their licence.

Many novel types of HAV are designed to frequently carry non-deployable payloads, in some cases multiple times a day or week, for multiple customers. As the frequency of flights increases, the assessment process would become burdensome.

1.5 Information to be taken into account when applying this policy

Information to be taken into account in the application of this policy includes:

- + relevant sections of the Act and the Regulations
- + any applicable technical advice, reports, or assessments provided by other space agencies, regulators, or experts
- + any licence, permit, or other authorisation relevant to the proposed activities

1.6 Approach to non-deployable high-altitude payloads

This policy enables operators to fly certain payloads without applying for a variation to their licence and is managed through conditions on high-altitude licence holders which limit the types of activity the licence holder can undertake, including:

- + an envelope of acceptable activity that allows the licence holder to fly certain payloads that present a low national interest and national security risk without the licence holder or applicant having to apply for a variation of the licence or a new licence
- + a requirement that the licence holder have robust due diligence processes in place to identify who their customers are and what payloads they are flying, and the ability for MBIE to audit the implementation of these processes
- + periodic reporting to MBIE, in accordance with MBIE guidance and the [Reporting Form](#), on the identities of customers and the nature of payloads following missions

For any payloads that fall outside of the envelope of acceptable activity the licence holder must apply for a licence variation or a new licence.

MBIE has developed [guidance](#) for licence holders on undertaking due diligence and internal assurance, including to:

- + ensure they are not providing services to sanctioned or terrorist entities
- + ensure they can assess and take action if there are changes in their business relationship with customers, such as a change of ownership or the onboarding of new customers
- + ensure that they are not providing services to entities that may impact New Zealand's national security/national interest
- + ensure the collected data and purpose of the payload is being used for its intended purpose, to a reasonable extent
- + ensure they have the proper safety plans in place for each payload launch as determined by the CAA
- + keep records of their flights and customers and provide these to NZSA when requested