



STS Standard Scenario for drones Study Guide

STS-01 & STS-02 Theory Examination Preparation - Ireland Edition

A comprehensive learning resource covering all eight EASA subject areas for the Standard Scenario theory examination, with national references for the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA).

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PART I

Regulatory Framework

The legal foundation of drone operations in Europe - from the category system to the specific rules governing Standard Scenarios.



CHAPTER 01

The EU Drone Regulatory Framework

Before you can understand the Standard Scenarios, you need to understand the regulatory system they sit within. The European Union has built a comprehensive framework for drone operations that applies across all member states. This chapter gives you the foundation - the category system, the role of Standard Scenarios within it, and the key regulations you need to know.

1.1 The Three Operational Categories

In the European Union, all drone operations are classified into one of three risk-based categories: **Open**, **Specific**, and **Certified**. The category your operation falls into determines what authorisations, training, and equipment you need.

The **Open Category** covers the lowest-risk operations. If your flight stays within defined limits - low altitude, light drone, visual line of sight, away from crowds - you can fly without any special authorisation. You need basic registration and a competency certificate, but no government approval for each flight.

The **Specific Category** covers operations that carry a higher level of risk - for example, flying a heavier drone over a populated area, or flying beyond visual line of sight. These operations require either a full risk assessment (known as SORA) or compliance with a pre-approved Standard Scenario. This is where STS-01 and STS-02 sit.

The **Certified Category** covers the highest-risk operations - those comparable to manned aviation in terms of the risk they pose. This includes operations over assemblies of people with large drones, or carrying passengers. Certified operations require type certificates, operator certificates, and pilot licensing equivalent to manned aviation standards. The Certified Category is outside the scope of the STS examination.

Key Concept

The category system is risk-based, not aircraft-based. The same drone can be operated in different categories depending on how, where, and under what conditions it is flown.

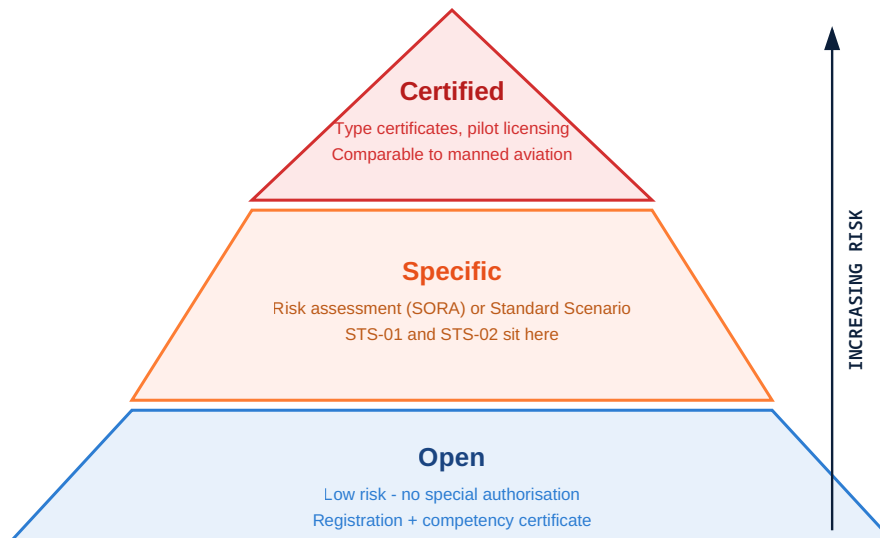


Figure 1.1 - The three EASA operational categories

1.2 The Open Category - Context and Boundaries

The Open Category is divided into three subcategories - A1, A2, and A3 - each with its own rules about where you can fly and how close to people.

Subcategory A1 covers the lowest-risk operations close to people. With drones under 250 grams (whether privately built or meeting the **C0** class requirements), the remote pilot may fly over uninvolved persons but never over assemblies of people. **C1** class drones are also permitted in A1, but with a stricter rule: *no intentional flight over uninvolved persons*. This is the least restrictive subcategory.

Subcategory A2 permits flights close to people with drones meeting the C2 class requirements, provided the pilot holds an A2 certificate of competency and maintains a safe horizontal distance of at least 30 metres from uninvolved persons. This distance can be reduced to 5 metres when the drone is in low-speed mode.

Subcategory A3 permits flights far from people - in areas where it is reasonably expected that no uninvolved person will be endangered - using drones up to 25 kilograms meeting C2, C3, or C4 class requirements.

All Open Category operations share certain limits:

- Maximum altitude of **120 metres** above ground level
- Visual Line of Sight must be maintained at all times
- No transport of dangerous goods
- No dropping of materials

- The UAS operator must be registered with the national aviation authority - in Ireland, this is the IAA, and registration is completed online via the IAA's drone portal
- The remote pilot must hold at least a basic online competency certificate (A1/A3)

Exam Tip

The distinction between *operator* and *pilot* is tested. The operator is the person or organisation responsible for the operation (and must be registered). The pilot is the person who actually flies the aircraft. They may be different entities.

When an operation exceeds any of these Open Category limits - for example, flying in a populated area with a drone heavier than 4 kilograms, flying beyond visual line of sight, or flying above 120 metres - it falls into the Specific Category. Understanding where the Open Category ends and the Specific Category begins helps you recognise which operations require STS compliance.

1.3 The Specific Category - When It Applies

The Specific Category exists for operations that carry more risk than the Open Category permits but do not require the full oversight of the Certified Category. If your intended operation exceeds any Open Category limit, you are in the Specific Category.

Normally, a Specific Category operation requires you to conduct a full **Specific Operations Risk Assessment (SORA)** - a complex, multi-step process that assesses both air risk and ground risk and prescribes mitigations accordingly. You then submit this assessment to the national competent authority and receive an operational authorisation before you can fly.

However, the EU has recognised that many Specific Category operations follow common, well-understood patterns. Rather than requiring every operator to conduct a bespoke SORA for these routine operations, the EU has defined **Standard Scenarios** - pre-approved compliance packages where the risk assessment has already been done. As long as your operation fits within the defined conditions, you can declare compliance and fly without a full SORA submission.

1.4 Standard Scenarios: What They Are and Why They Exist

A Standard Scenario is a pre-defined set of operational conditions, requirements, and mitigations that together describe a specific type of Specific Category operation. Think of it as a compliance template: someone has already done the risk assessment for you, and as long as you meet all the required conditions, you are legally authorised to fly.

There are currently two Standard Scenarios defined by the EU:

- **STS-01:** VLOS operations over a controlled ground area in a populated environment

- **STS-02:** BVLOS operations with airspace observers over a controlled ground area in a sparsely populated environment

To operate under a Standard Scenario, the operator submits a **declaration** to the national competent authority - not an application for authorisation. The declaration states that the operator and remote pilot meet all the conditions of the chosen scenario. There is no flight-by-flight government approval. Instead, the operator self-declares compliance, and the authority can audit at any time.

This self-declaration model places direct responsibility on the operator and pilot. You are not waiting for someone to check your work - you are affirming that your operation meets the standard. If an audit reveals that it does not, the consequences fall on you.

PART VIII

Test Questions

440 multiple-choice questions covering all five subject areas of the STS theoretical exam. Each question includes the correct answer and an expert explanation.

CHAPTER 16

Aviation regulations and legal framework

This chapter contains 96 test questions from the area *Aviation regulations and legal framework*.

Q001

Where does an Ireland-based UAS operator register with the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) and submit STS-related digital declarations, and what is the current validity period of the operator registration?

- A) At the IAA national headquarters at The Times Building, D'Olier Street, in person - registration is valid for 1 year
- B) On the MySRS portal at iaa.mysrs.ie - registration is valid for 2 years ✓**
- C) Through the AirNav Ireland operations portal - registration is valid for 3 years
- D) Through the central European Drone Operator Portal hosted by EASA - registration is permanent

Explanation: The IAA's drone operator registration, the Open A1/A3 online theory test, the A2 application and STS-related operational submissions are all managed through the MySRS portal at iaa.mysrs.ie. Per the IAA Schedule of Charges effective 1 January 2026, operator registration costs €41 and is valid for two years; the operator must renew before expiry to continue operating lawfully. EASA does not register individual operators.

Q002

Under the Irish Aviation Authority (Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones)) Order 2023 (S.I. No. 24/2023), an STS operator is prosecuted summarily in the District Court for a breach of EU 2019/947. What is the maximum penalty the Court may impose on summary conviction?

- A) A formal caution and revocation of the operator's MySRS account, with no other penalty
- B) A fine not exceeding €500,000, imprisonment for up to 3 years, or both
- C) An automatic permanent ban from holding a UAS operator registration in any EU member state
- D) A fine not exceeding €5,000, imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both ✓**

Explanation: S.I. No. 24/2023 sets out the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) enforcement framework for breaches of EU 2019/947 and EU 2019/945. On summary conviction in the District Court the maximum penalty is a fine not exceeding €5,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both. The higher figures (€500,000 / 3 years) apply only where the Director of Public Prosecutions elects to prosecute on indictment for serious offences. A 'permanent ban' is not a statutory penalty under the Order.

Q003

During an STS-02 operation in a rural area, a member of An Garda Síochána approaches the remote pilot and issues a direction that the drone must not be flown. What is the legal basis and the required response?

A) Under S.I. No. 24/2023, An Garda Síochána may direct a remote pilot not to operate where a breach is suspected; the pilot must comply immediately ✓

B) An Garda Síochána has no statutory power over drone operations; the pilot may continue if the STS declaration is valid

C) The pilot must complete the flight as planned and report the Garda direction to the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) afterwards in writing

D) A Garda direction takes effect only when confirmed in writing by the District Court within 24 hours

Explanation: S.I. No. 24/2023 extends specific enforcement powers to An Garda Síochána, including the power to direct an operator or remote pilot to stop operating and to detain the UAS, where a breach of the regulations is suspected or where the drone is suspected of being used in connection with an offence. The remote pilot must comply with the direction immediately. The Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) and An Garda Síochána also have formal arrangements to coordinate drone enforcement.

Q004

An STS operation in Ireland results in a drone crash that causes minor damage to a parked car at the operating site. No person is injured. How must the operator report this to the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA)?

A) A short note to the IAA's general info inbox is sufficient since no person was injured in the event

B) Reporting is only required for crashes involving injury to a person; the operator may include the event in the next annual audit

C) Notify drone@iaa.ie and submit the occurrence report through the European Aviation Safety Reporting Portal (ECCAIRS 2) ✓

D) File a NOTAM with AirNav Ireland describing the incident; the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) receives a copy automatically

Explanation: The Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) requires drone accidents and serious incidents to be reported both by direct notification to drone@iaa.ie and through the European Aviation Safety Reporting Portal (ECCAIRS 2). Reports submitted via the portal feed directly into the IAA occurrence-reporting database where the relevant inspector picks them up; the portal does not require pre-registration. NOTAMs are an airspace-notice product issued by AirNav Ireland - they are not an occurrence-reporting channel.

Q005

An STS operator in Ireland needs to verify that an organisation offering the UAS Remote Pilot Competency course is genuinely recognised by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA). What national designation should the operator look for?

A) A 'Declared UAS Training Organisation' (DUTO) recognition with a reference number bearing the prefix IRL.DUTO- issued by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) ✓

B) An ICAO Annex 1 Approved Training Organisation (ATO) certificate held by the provider

C) A continuing professional development (CPD) membership of the Royal Aeronautical Society - Irish branch

D) A Department of Transport licence to provide vocational education in aviation subjects

Explanation: In Ireland the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) recognises drone training providers under the 'Declared UAS Training Organisation' (DUTO) regime. Each recognised DUTO holds an IAA reference number with the prefix IRL.DUTO- (for example IRL.DUTO-10007). A provider with this recognition is competent to issue the UAS Remote Pilot Competency Certificate, and EASA member states recognise these certificates by mutual recognition. The ICAO Annex 1 ATO concept covers manned-aviation training, not drone training.

Q006

Does the Irish Aviation Authority (Testing for Alcohol) Order 2021 (S.I. No. 22/2021), which sets a limit of 9 microgrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath, apply directly to STS remote pilots?

A) Yes - the 9 µg / 100 ml breath limit applies to any person operating any aircraft in Irish airspace, including drones

B) No - S.I. 22/2021 applies only to flight crew and cabin crew of manned aircraft; STS remote pilots are bound by the EU 2019/947 'not under the influence' rule ✓

C) Yes - but only for STS-02 BVLOS operations; STS-01 visual-line-of-sight pilots are exempt from the breath threshold

D) No - there are no alcohol provisions of any kind applicable to drone operations in Ireland

Explanation: S.I. No. 22/2021 defines a 'relevant person' as a member of flight crew or cabin crew, so the 9 µg / 100 ml breath threshold applies to manned-aircraft crews - it does not bind STS remote pilots. STS pilots are subject to the EU 2019/947 / IMSAFE 'fit-to-fly' principle: no consumption of alcohol in a quantity or timeframe that could affect performance. An authorised officer (An Garda Síochána or the IAA) may still direct a drone pilot to stop operating where impairment is suspected.

Q007

A US-based STS operator visiting Ireland for a 5-day commercial filming campaign holds a US-issued remote pilot certificate. What is the operator's first step under Irish national requirements before any flight in Ireland?

- A)** Apply by post to the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) drone division at The Times Building, D'Olier Street, at least 30 days in advance
- B)** No Irish registration is required - the US certificate gives reciprocal recognition under ICAO Annex 8
- C)** Hold an EU-wide drone operator number issued automatically by the US Federal Aviation Administration on departure
- D) Register as a UAS operator on the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) MySRS portal (iaa.mysrs.ie) and obtain an Irish operator registration number before any flight ✓**

Explanation: Operator registration is administered by the member state of operations where the operator is not already EU-registered. A non-EU visitor operating drones in Ireland must register on the IAA's MySRS portal at iaa.mysrs.ie and obtain an Irish operator registration number; that number must be displayed on the UAS and used in any STS declaration. A US Part 107 remote pilot certificate is not automatically recognised; STS competency must still be evidenced through the EU framework or the IAA's conversion arrangements.

Q008

For the most serious drone offences, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) may elect to prosecute on indictment under S.I. No. 24/2023 instead of summarily. What is the maximum penalty available on conviction on indictment?

- A)** A fine of €5,000 and a permanent ban on holding a drone operator registration in any EU state
- B)** An immediate revocation of the operator's MySRS account and a public warning notice on the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) website
- C) A fine not exceeding €500,000, imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years, or both ✓**
- D)** A civil penalty of up to €10,000 imposed administratively by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) without court proceedings

Explanation: S.I. No. 24/2023 provides for two tiers of prosecution for breaches of the drone regulations. Summary proceedings in the District Court carry a maximum of €5,000 / 6 months. For serious breaches the DPP may prosecute on indictment, with a maximum penalty on conviction of €500,000, imprisonment for up to 3 years, or both. Irish drone law does not provide for administrative civil penalties imposed by the IAA outside the court system.

Q021

An Irish model-aircraft club applies for an Article 16 'authorisation for clubs and associations' under EU 2019/947. Which national authority issues this authorisation, and what does it cover?

A) The Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) issues the Article 16 authorisation; it covers club members operating under the club's rules at the club's notified sites, providing a national alternative pathway to Open/Specific Category for traditional model-aircraft activity ✓

B) EASA in Cologne issues the Article 16 authorisation centrally for all EU clubs; it covers any flight by any club-affiliated pilot anywhere in the EU

C) An Garda Síochána issues the Article 16 authorisation for security clearance; it covers individual events only and lapses after each event

D) The Department of Transport issues the Article 16 authorisation; it covers all UAS operations at registered civil aerodromes by default

Explanation: Under Article 16 of EU 2019/947 the national competent authority may issue an authorisation to model-aircraft clubs and associations enabling members to fly under the club's published rules at notified sites - a distinct national pathway from Open and Specific Category. In Ireland that authority is the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA); the authorisation lists the sites, conditions and member-management arrangements. EASA does not issue these authorisations; neither does An Garda Síochána or the Department of Transport.

Q022

An STS operator in Ireland labels their drone for service. Where must the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA)-issued UAS operator registration number actually be carried?

A) It need not be physically displayed on the drone; carrying a printed copy in the pilot's wallet during operations is sufficient under Irish national rules

B) Inside the battery compartment of the drone, hidden from view, so that the number is visible only during maintenance

C) Displayed visibly on the airframe of every drone the operator uses, and loaded into the drone's Direct Remote Identification (DRI) broadcast for the relevant class of drone (C1, C2, C3, C5 or C6) ✓

D) Only at the takeoff site, by a printed sign at least 1 m square, not on the drone itself

Explanation: Per EU 2019/947 Article 14 the UAS operator's registration number must be displayed visibly on the airframe of every drone the operator uses. For drones with Direct Remote Identification (DRI) - required by EU 2019/945 on C1, C2, C3, C5 and C6 class drones (including all C5 and C6 drones used for STS) - the same number must also be configured into the DRI broadcast. The Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) verifies both during inspection; the registration number is not a 'pilot-carried' document, and a sign at the takeoff site does not substitute for the on-drone label.

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