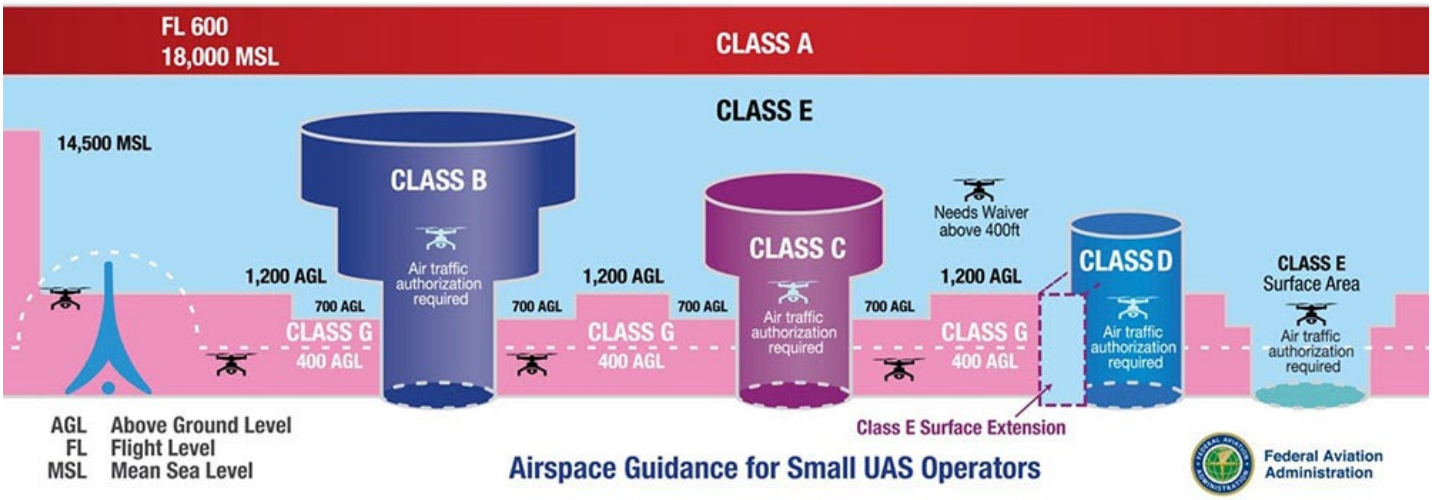
CDFS-4122

Understanding Airspace for Drone Pilots

Table 1. Comparison Table for Airspace Classes.



Class	Stands For	Controlled	Altitude/Range	Structure/Shape	Drone Access	FAA Authorization Needed? (LAANC/Drone Zone)	Aircraft Req.	VFR Weather Minimums
A	Airlines highest attitude, special	Yes	18,000 ft MSL to FL600 (60,000 ft)	Layer across entire continental U.S.	No UAS allowed	N/A	IFR flight plan, clearance, Mode C transponder, ADS-B Out	N/A – VFR not allowed
B	Busy around major towered airports	Yes	Surface to 10,000 ft MSL	3-tier upside-down wedding cake	Yes, with FAA approval, below 400ft AGL	Yes, LAANC/ Drone Zone	ATC clearance, Mode C transponder, ADS-B Out	3 SM visibility, clear of clouds
C	Congested around medium-sized towered airports	Yes	Surface to 4,000 ft AGL (charted in MSL)	2-tier: 5 NM core (SFC–4,000 ft AGL), 10 NM shelf (1,200–4,000 ft AGL)	Yes, with FAA approval, below 400ft AGL	Yes, LAANC/ Drone Zone	2-way radio contact, Mode C transponder, ADS-B Out	3-152 Rule
D	Dialogue still required, talk to ATC, around low activity tower airports	Yes	Surface to 2,500 ft AGL	4–5 NM radius cylinder	Yes, with FAA approval, below 400ft AGL	Yes, LAANC/ Drone Zone	2-way radio contact	3-152 Rule

Class	Stands For	Controlled	Altitude/Range	Structure/Shape	Drone Access	FAA Authorization Needed? (LAANC/Drone Zone)	Aircraft Req.	VFR Weather Minimums
E			Starting at surface (E-SFC)	Varies: En route, surface area around non-towered airports	Yes, only if it's E-SFC (dashed magenta), below 400ft AGL	Yes, LAANC/ Drone Zone	No equipment unless IFR	Below 10,000 ft MSL: 3-152 Rule Above 10,000 ft MSL: 5-111 Rule
E	Everywhere else that's controlled, but not B–D or A, Non-towered airports	Yes	Starting at 700 or 1,200 ft AGL	Varies: E-700 AGL surrounds non-towered airports w/ instrument procedures. E-1,200 AGL found in rural areas, transitioning to en route airspace	No UAS allowed **exceeds 400 ft AGL, requires a waiver to access**	N/A	No equipment unless IFR	Below 10,000 ft MSL: 3-152 Rule Above 10,000 ft MSL: 5-111 Rule
E			Class E en route above 1,200 ft AGL up to 18,000 ft MSL (not including Class A)	Varies: En route, surface area around non-towered airports	No UAS allowed **exceeds 400 ft AGL, requires a waiver to access**	N/A	No equipment unless IFR	**Below 10,000 ft MSL**: 3-152 Rule **Above 10,000 ft MSL**: 5-111 Rule
G	Ground/ Go-freely, low altitudes, uncontrolled	No, but keep visual separation	Surface to 700 ft or 1,200 ft AGL (depends on region)	Uncontrolled, fills space below E	Freely allowed, below 400ft AGL	No authorization needed, unless near Class E-SFC	No ATC contact needed	Day (below 1,200 ft AGL): **1 SM, clear of clouds.** Night: **3 SM, 152 Rule**

Table 1 notes:

"3-152 Rule" (below 10,000 ft MSL): 3 statute miles (SM) visibility, 1,000 ft above the highest cloud, 500 ft below the lowest cloud, and 2,000 ft horizontal distance from any cloud (≈0.38 SM). See Figure 2: 3-152 Rule Class E Weather Minimums.

"5-111 Rule" (above 10,000 ft MSL): 5 SM visibility, 1,000 ft above the highest cloud, 1,000 ft below the lowest cloud, and 1 SM (5,280 ft) horizontal distance from any cloud. See Figure 3: 5-111 Rule Class E Weather Minimums.