

LIMITED ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

Reference Number	CA18/2/3/10008						
Classification	Accident	Date	24 May 2021	Time	1100Z		
Type of Operation	Aerial Work (Part 137)						
Location							
Place	Offshore, Table Bay, about 4km south of Robben Island						
GPS Co-ordinates	Latitude	S33°51'40"	Longitude	E018°25'43"	Elevation	25m	
Aircraft Information							
Registration	ZT-UTG						
Model/Make	DJI Phantom 4 Pro						
Damage to Aircraft	Drone not recovered		Total Aircraft Hours	21.20			
Pilot-in-command							
Licence Type	Remote Pilot Licence		Gender	Male	Age	48	
Licence Valid	Yes						
Total Hours on Type	103.58		Total Flying Hours	103.58			
People On-board	0	Injuries	0	Fatalities	0	Other (on Ground)	0
What Happened							
<p>On 24 May 2021, a pilot was conducting aerial work using a DJI Phantom 4 Pro drone with registration mark ZT-UTG, less than 2 nautical miles (about 4km) south of Robben Island when the accident occurred. The drone flight was a commercial operation.</p> <p>After taking aerial pictures of a ship in the sea at around 1100Z, the drone was piloted back to base, however, it lost communication with the controller/pilot en route. According to the pilot, there were a lot of seagulls around the area that chased after the drone. He battled to keep sight of the drone as a result of the sun rays reflecting on the water surface, and thus, causing blinding glare to his vision (as he was facing the sun). The drone fell into the sea and was not recovered after it went under (submerged). No injuries were reported during this accident.</p> <p>The cause of the accident: The pilot operated the drone in conditions which were not conducive to keeping sight of the drone (visually tracking the drone). As a result, he lost control of the drone due to sun rays reflecting on the water surface and, thus, causing blinding glare to his vision.</p>							



Figure 1: DJI Phantom 4 Pro (source: Google)

Safety Action

None.

Safety Message and/or Safety Recommendation/s

Drone pilots operating within line of sight should ensure that conditions around their area of operation are conducive for a safe flight and that there are no obstructions in their line of sight.

Purpose of the Investigation

*In terms of Regulation 12.03.1 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, this report was compiled in the interest of the promotion of aviation safety and the reduction of the risk of aviation accidents or incidents and **not to apportion blame or liability**.*

About this Report

Decisions regarding whether to investigate, and the scope of an investigation are based on many factors, including the level of safety benefit likely to be obtained from an investigation. For this occurrence, no investigation has been conducted, and the Accident and Incident Investigations Division (AIID) has relied on the information submitted by the affected person/s and organisation/s to compile this brief report. The report has been compiled using information supplied in the initial notification, as well as follow-up information to bring awareness of potential safety issues to the industry in respect of this occurrence, as well as possible safety action/s that the industry might want to consider in preventing a recurrence of a similar accident.

This report provides an opportunity to share safety message/s in the absence of an investigation.

All times given in this report are Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC) and will be denoted by (Z). South African Standard Time is UTC plus 2 hours.

Disclaimer

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This report is issued by:

**Accident and Incident Investigations Division
South African Civil Aviation Authority
Republic of South Africa**