



FAA to Broaden Registration of Drones in Effort to Increase Safe Operations

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U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Michael Huerta announced a plan this week that will require all owners of small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) to register their UAS. This plan comes in anticipation of the over one million UAS to be sold over the upcoming holiday season. Working with a task force of UAS stakeholders including representatives from the Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI), the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) and the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA), the FAA hopes to implement the rules for the UAS registration system by mid-December. The rules will likely apply retroactively to all current UAS owners who will be given a period of time to complete the registration. Registration is considered necessary to encourage accountability of UAS operators, to reinforce FAA's efforts to integrate UAS safely in the national airspace and to educate UAS owners on flying safely.

Foxx and Huerta stated that the registration plan is a necessary step to be taken that will facilitate the FAA's enforcement of rules against those flying UAS unsafely in the national airspace. However, the rules are not intended to delay any of the current efforts to integrate UAS into the national airspace; in fact, Huerta confirmed that FAA has now granted about 2,000 petitions for a Section 333 Exemption that allows drones for commercial operations.

The FAA's announcement is another step to address what it considers to be a rapidly growing rise in reckless UAS operations. However, it will not affect those who have received a Section 333 Exemption, as they already are required to register their UAS prior to operations. Given the impending registration rules, businesses that own or intend to purchase UAS for commercial purposes should consider petitioning the FAA for a Section 333 Exemption.

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