

November 24, 2015

The FAA's Unmanned Aircraft Systems Registration Task Force has released its recommendations for registration of small unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The task force has proposed a registration process with three key elements:

- UAV owners will fill out an electronic registration form available through the FAA's website or through apps developed by third parties.
- UAV owners who register will immediately receive an electronic registration certificate and a personal registration number that can be used for all UAVs that they own.
- The registration number must be marked on all UAVs owned by the person who registers.

These requirements will be operator-based. Each operator will use the same registration number for all UAVs that it flies. The requirements will apply to UAVs that weigh more than 250 grams (about 0.55 pounds) and less than 55 pounds. UAVs that weigh 250 grams or less will not have to be registered; UAVs that weigh 55 pounds or more will not be eligible for this registration process. FAA authorizations for commercial UAV use already include registration requirements; while this new program is aimed primarily at obtaining information on the growing numbers of recreational flyers, we expect the FAA eventually to merge the two processes.

UAV owners will need to provide names and street addresses via a web-based system. Provision of email addresses or phone numbers will be voluntary. UAV owners must be at least 13 years old to register.

If an owner prefers not to put its registration number on the UAV, the recommended process will allow the owner, after registering, to provide the UAV's serial number. Either number will need to be readily accessible on the craft, although this will include inside the battery compartment (if tools are not needed to open it).

The task force suggested that registration should include an "education component" that the UAV owner acknowledges before the registration process can be completed. The task force recommended that registration be free to encourage full participation.

The FAA will now consider the task force's recommendations. Although it is likely that the FAA will follow many of the recommendations, the agency may still decide to modify them. The FAA has indicated that it wants to have a registration regime in place before the end of the year, but there is not a hard deadline.

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