

# NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.504

National Policy

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2/28/19

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2/28/20

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**SUBJ:** Expanded Unmanned Aircraft Systems Oversight

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- 1. Purpose of This Notice.** This notice outlines updated Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) surveillance requirements for Flight Standards District Offices (FSDO) to immediately incorporate into their Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 National Work Program Guidelines (NPG) work plans. It also provides guidance for doing the necessary analysis and coordination that either trigger the requirements or help target the required activity.
- 2. Audience.** The primary audience for this notice is Flight Standards Service Office of General Aviation Safety Assurance (AFG) personnel planning and conducting surveillance of UAS operations and the personnel in the Safety Analysis and Promotion Division who will assist them. The secondary audience includes other Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) management, operational, and administrative employees, as appropriate.
- 3. Where You Can Find This Notice.** You can find this notice on the MyFAA employee website at [https://employees.faa.gov/tools\\_resources/orders\\_notices](https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices). Inspectors can access this notice through the Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS) at <http://fsims.avs.faa.gov>. Operators can find this notice on the FAA's website at <http://fsims.faa.gov>. This notice is available to the public at [http://www.faa.gov/regulations\\_policies/orders\\_notices](http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices).
- 4. Applicability.** The guidance in this notice defines new policy and must be implemented into FSDO work plans for 2019. This is applicable to all FSDOs.
- 5. Distribution.** This notice will be distributed to Flight Standards policy offices located at FAA headquarters in Washington, D.C.; AFG offices; and all FSDOs.
- 6. Background.** Based on lack of demonstrable risk UAS posed to the National Airspace System (NAS) when compared to known risks in General Aviation (GA) and air transport, Flight Standards made UAS surveillance a Planned Surveillance Work Activity (P-item) in the FAA Order 1800.56R, National Flight Standards Work Program Guidelines, for FY 2018. In FY 2018, Flight Standards reviewed the data from P-item surveillance, UAS sightings, and Program Tracking and Reporting Subsystem (PTRS)/Enforcement Information System (EIS) entries resulting from UAS investigations to develop a more robust risk profile for UAS. The Safety Analysis and Promotion Division analyzed the resulting data. The analysis indicates UAS do pose potential risks to air transport due to UAS sightings in communities bordering airport

approach and departure paths. Additional potential risks were identified from noncompliant operations that would require local analysis to target, and noncompliant operators also pose potential risk to firefighting, law enforcement, and emergency response efforts. In consideration of these potential risks, specific conditions and targeting mechanisms were determined to be the best risk-based approach to expanding UAS surveillance opportunities as part of a broader UAS oversight strategy.

## 7. Reference Documents (current editions):

- For additional information on the requirements for commercial operations of small UAS (sUAS), refer to Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) parts 91 and 107, found at <http://www.ecfr.gov>.
- To review the UAS P-item applicable to all FSDOs, review FAA Order 1800.56, National Flight Standards Work Program Guidelines, at [https://www.faa.gov/regulations\\_policies/orders\\_notices/index.cfm/go/document.information/documentID/1034408](https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices/index.cfm/go/document.information/documentID/1034408).
- For guidance on conducting UAS surveillance and investigations, refer to FAA Order 8900.1, Volume 16, Chapter 5, Surveillance/Compliance and Enforcement, at <http://fsims.faa.gov>.

**8. Action.** Each FSDO will locally add the following Required Surveillance Work Activities (R-item) to their FY 2019 NPG work programs:

**a. Conditional R-Item.** Conduct one UAS site visit, either Operations (1623), Maintenance (3631), or Avionics (5631), where 5 or more UAS investigations<sup>1</sup> occur within Class B, C, or D airspace, or 10 or more total investigations occur in any airspace. Do not enter an “X4XX” code for public aircraft operations (PAO), as that should be indicated in the “National Use” field. (See reporting instructions in Appendix A).

**Note:** Locally analyze the reports that trigger the required surveillance for root cause and common elements (e.g., locations, times, and events) that yield the best surveillance opportunities.

**b. Targeted R-Item.** Conduct one UAS site visit, either Operations (1623), Maintenance (3631), or Avionics (5631) when notified by AFG leadership. Do not enter an “X4XX” code for PAO, as that should be indicated in the “National Use” field. (See reporting instructions in Appendix A.)

**Note:** The Safety Analysis and Promotion Division provides a quarterly report to AFG leadership that will include airports where UAS sightings are most frequently reported. The leadership will assign UAS surveillance tasks near these identified airports. General data indicates surveillance should be planned along approach or departure corridors just outside of the airport. Airports with 10 or more sightings will be included on the report, and airports experiencing significant increase in the number of UAS sightings will be targeted for priority

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<sup>1</sup> Investigations include incidents, NMACs, accidents, and C&Es, but exclude non-actionable sightings.

surveillance. FSDO personnel are encouraged to consult the Safety Analysis and Promotion Division for assistance in analyzing the data for potential surveillance areas if needed.

**c. R-Items Per Order 2150.3, FAA Compliance and Enforcement Program.** Conduct a UAS site visit, either Operations (1623), Maintenance (3631), or Avionics (5631), when supporting enforcement actions against any UAS operations that interfere with wildfire, law enforcement, or emergency response. Do not enter an “X4XX” code for PAO, as that should be indicated in the “National Use” field. (See reporting instructions in Appendix A.) FSDO personnel will coordinate with Office of Security and Hazardous Materials Safety (ASH) Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP) agents and local law enforcement for activities during wildfires and well-known rescue/emergency response efforts, to support as needed.

**9. PTRS Recording.** When reporting these UAS surveillance activities, it is extremely important for analysis purposes to properly record the type of operation that was observed. The PTRS records should contain the appropriate 14 CFR parts being used, airman name(s), related certificates, waivers, or exemptions held, a clear description of the action taken to include location, start and end times of the surveillance, and the related Enforcement Investigation Report (EIR) number when applicable.

**a. “14 CFR” Field.** Because there is not a code to mark recreational UAS operations at this time, note part 107 for all sUAS operations (under 55 pounds) that are not certificated operations in the “14 CFR” field. Distinguish between operations that are truly part 107 and those that are recreational by entering the code “44809” in the “Local Use” field to refer to recreational operations that would fall under Section 349 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018. Certificated operations should be coded with the correct regulation (e.g., 14 CFR part 91, 135, or 137).

**Note:** Part 107 does allow for recreational operations, so knowledge of the requirements for both regulations is required to properly counsel the operator and record the event.

**b. “National Use” Field.** Enter the codes as instructed in Order 8900.1, Volume 16, Chapter 1, Section 4, paragraph 16-1-4-5, Program Tracking and Reporting Subsystem (PTRS), to properly document the size of the UAS, and whether the UAS was used for public, civil, or military purposes, per Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 14, Sections 1, General Information on Public Aircraft Operations, and 2, Public Aircraft Operations and Surveillance Government Aircraft Operations Versus Civil Aircraft Operations. Specifically, enter UAS, a hyphen, and follow it up by the type of operator (Public (P), Civil (C), or Military (M)), then add another hyphen, and follow it up with the size (Large (L) or Small (S)). For example:

- UAS-M-L = UAS, Military operator, Large aircraft (55 pounds and over).
- UAS-P-L = UAS, Public operator, Large aircraft.
- UAS-C-S = UAS, Civil operator, Small aircraft.
- UAS-U-S = UAS, Unknown operator, Small aircraft.

c. **“Point of Departure” Field.** Investigations triggered by UAS sightings near airports should include the airport code of the reporting aircraft or tower.

d. **No UAS Activity Observed.** If no activity is observed during a surveillance, note the time block (start and end time) of the surveillance and lack of UAS activity in the comments section.

**10. Deviations to This Notice.** It is necessary to adhere to procedures in this notice to achieve uniform administration of this directive material. The General Aviation and Commercial Division must approve any deviations to this notice.

**11. Suggestions or Comments.** The General Aviation and Commercial Division welcomes and considers all suggestions or comments regarding this notice. Please use FAA Form 1320-19, Directive Feedback Information. Please use the “Other Comments” block on FAA Form 1320-19 to provide a complete explanation of why the suggested change is necessary. You may correct, as necessary, a copy of the pertinent information, or provide a handwritten note for consideration. Send your suggestions or comments to [9-AFS-800-Correspondence@faa.gov](mailto:9-AFS-800-Correspondence@faa.gov).

**12. Disposition.** We will incorporate the information in this notice into Order 8900.1 before this notice expires. Direct questions concerning the information in this notice to the General Aviation and Commercial Division via email at [9-AFS-800-Correspondence@faa.gov](mailto:9-AFS-800-Correspondence@faa.gov).



Robert C. Carty  
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**Appendix A. UAS Surveillance Item Procedures**

**Vital Contacts**

<b>General Aviation and Commercial Division (AFS-800)</b>	<b>Safety Analysis and Promotion Division (AFS-900)</b>	<b>Air Traffic Organization Mission Support Services (AJV)</b>	<b>Office of Security and Hazardous Materials Safety (ASH)</b>
9-afs-800-part107waivers@faa.gov	afs-930-only-uas@faa.gov	9-ajv-115-uasorganization@faa.gov	Assigned Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP) Special Agent or leap@faa.gov
<b>Contact for:</b> Policy guidance, checking waiver and exemption status for UAS operators.	<b>Contact for:</b> Data analysis questions and guidance for planning items.	<b>Contact for:</b> Information on approved UAS operations in local airspace.	<b>Contact for:</b> Obtaining registration information, assistance in working with local law enforcement.

**Purpose of This Appendix.** The information in this appendix lays out processes for triggering and conducting the conditionally required inspection items noted in subparagraphs 8a-c of this notice. All three items can be broken down into four phases per the instruction below. Guidance for the report section of each item is as follows:

**a) Conditional R-Item.**

- 1) **Track.** The Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) UAS point of contact (POC) will keep a tally of UAS investigations conducted from FSDO personnel per fiscal year. When either 5 investigations occur in Class B, C, or D airspace or a total of 10 investigations occur in any airspace, the FSDO POC will alert the FSDO manager that a UAS surveillance is required.
- 2) **Plan.** The FSDO UAS POC will review the 5 to 10 investigations that triggered the required surveillance to determine common elements among the investigations that suggest a surveillance opportunity. Similarities to look for include repeating operators, locations, types of operations, and hours of operation. FSDO UAS POCs are encouraged to reach out to the Safety Analysis and Promotion Division for assistance with analyses if needed, and to consult Air Traffic Organization Mission Support Services (AJV) for data on UAS authorizations in the area. Also, when surveillance is planned to target certain operators, the FSDO UAS POC is expected to reach out to the General Aviation and

Commercial Division for assistance in tracking the operator and determining if the operator is in possession of a waiver or exemption.<sup>2</sup>

- 3) **Conduct.** The assigned personnel from the FSDO should conduct the surveillance activity as planned and according to guidance established in Order 8900.1, Volume 16, Chapter 5. The FAA Compliance Program should be applied as intended for all surveillance activities.
- 4) **Report.** See paragraph 9, PTRS Recording, of this notice.

**b) Targeted R-Item.**

- 1) **Track.** The Safety Analysis and Promotion Division will generate quarterly reports of UAS sightings near U.S. airports. When an airport experiences 10 or more UAS sightings in the quarter, the division will notify AFG leadership, who will in turn, assign the surveillance to the FSDO manager and the FSDO POC with jurisdiction.
- 2) **Plan.** The FSDO UAS POC will consult with analysts from the Safety Analysis and Promotion Division and review Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC) data to determine the best locations to establish surveillance opportunities near the targeted airport. The locations will be decided with available location data from the sightings reports and requested areas in LAANC. The surveillance areas are likely to be in community areas near approach and departure corridors for airports, not on the airports themselves, so no special access should be required to conduct the surveillance.
- 3) **Conduct.** The assigned personnel from the FSDO should conduct the surveillance activity as planned, and according to guidance established in Order 8900.1, Volume 16, Chapter 5. The FAA Compliance Program should be applied as intended for all surveillance activities.
- 4) **Report.** See paragraph 9, PTRS Recording, of this notice.

**c) Surveillance to Support FAA Order 2150.3.**

- 1) **Track.** This item triggers when known emergency response, firefighting, and law enforcement operations are being conducted within the FSDO's jurisdiction.
- 2) **Plan.** The key component to this item is precoordination between ASH LEAP agents and local law enforcement/emergency response teams to establish awareness of the FSDO's intention to support operations through direct enforcement on UAS operators. The FSDO UAS POC will need to work with ASH to brief local law enforcement/emergency response teams on the types of evidence needed to support investigations.

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<sup>2</sup> The General Aviation and Commercial Division is working to put UAS registration and waiver data into the Safety Performance Analysis System (SPAS) to facilitate easier planning of surveillance. However, FSDO personnel are encouraged to work with the General Aviation and Commercial Division until the information is properly uploaded and consistently available.

- 3) **Conduct.** Ideally, FAA personnel will not deploy to emergency response, law enforcement, and firefighting activities, as the FAA has no intention to cause additional coordination needs for these events. Noncompliant operators should be reported through ASH LEAP agents to the FSDO by local law enforcement, and emergency response teams for investigation. FSDO personnel may be sent to the scene for surveillance upon request of the responsible incident commanders. All investigations resulting from on-scene surveillance still require ASH LEAP coordination.
- 4) **Report.** See paragraph 9, PTRS Recording, of this notice.