



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

May 16, 2018

USAF Thunderbirds  
4445 Tyndall Avenue  
Nellis AFB, NV 89191-6079

Dear Lt. Col. Walsh:

Based on approval by the Department of the Air Force, the Thunderbirds 2018 maneuver package and flight demonstration is acceptable to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). FAA acceptance of the Thunderbirds' maneuvers package should not be construed as a special waiver, exemption or exception to the guidelines and provisions of any air show Certificate of Waiver, FAA Form 7711-1 (CoW) or FAA Order 8900.1 Volume 3 Chapter 6 Section 1. FAA acceptance is confirmation that the maneuvers, as presented in the 2018 maneuvers manual, meet FAA guidelines and special provisions. FAA acceptance advises FAA field personnel that each maneuver is acceptable to the FAA.

With the exception of flights in the transition area, flight less than 500 feet AGL over spectators, occupied structures, roads, vehicles, or vessels are not authorized. All flights below 500 feet AGL during ingress and egress to the aerobatic box must be approved by the Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) Inspector-In-Charge (IIC) of the aviation event and be discussed directly with that FAA inspector by you or your team representative during the winter meetings.

Non-aerobatic flyovers (e.g. stadiums, parades, funeral) are authorized at or above 500 feet above the highest obstacle and 1,000 feet either side of the intended flightpath when a CoW for a flyover is issued. A DD Form 2535 must be submitted to the jurisdictional FSDO coordinated with the jurisdictional Air Traffic Control Facility, and requires Command approval..

We will make the 2018 Thunderbirds' maneuver package, list of approved team members, and support manual available to the FAA Aviation Events Specialists (AES) and FSDOs. This package will also be used when conducting site feasibility determinations and airspace requirements for future demonstrations and completion of DD Form 2535.

All accidents and incidents must be reported to the National Aviation Event Specialist (NAES) and provide a briefing paper within 24 hours. This office is available at your convenience to answer any questions you may have concerning FAA aviation event policies. Sue Gardner, FAA National Aviation Event Specialist (NAES), can be reached by telephone at (630) 880-5834 or via email at [sue.gardner@faa.gov](mailto:sue.gardner@faa.gov).

We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to working with you and your entire team in assuring safety. We wish you a safe season in 2018.

Sincerely,

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Kieran O'Farrell  
Acting Manager, General Aviation Operations Branch