

SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

SURVEY REPORT 2025



**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Contact

This document was prepared by the Forecast and Performance Analysis Division (APO-100), Office of Aviation Policy and Plans, under the direction of Michael Lukacs.

The following staff may be contacted for further information:

Michael Lukacs	Michael.Lukacs@faa.gov
----------------	--

W. Gavin Ekins	William.G.Ekins@faa.gov
----------------	--

Darin Galyer	Darin.L.Galyer@faa.gov
--------------	--

Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems Survey Report 2025

Over the past two decades Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), commonly referred to as drones, have grown rapidly in popularity and proven useful in many applications including recreational, commercial, and emergency response. In calendar year 2025, the FAA estimates that there were 57.8 million UAS flights accumulating 21.7 million hours of UAS flight operations in the National Airspace System (NAS) (Table 1). The remainder of this document provides the methodology that supports these estimations, the assumptions and definitions used to derive values, additional context related to UAS operations, and interpretations relative to previous years.

Table 1 National Flight and Flight Time Estimates for Part 107 and Section 44809 Registrants

Total Flights	57,836,452
Total Flight Time (hours)	21,676,799

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has taken and continues to take extensive actions, including but not limited to public education and outreach, implementing new regulations, issuing certifications, and establishing registrations to safely integrate UAS into the National Airspace System (NAS). To continue the safe integration of UAS into the NAS, forecast future fleet and operations, and estimate economic impact, the FAA has a need for reliable UAS activity data. Though most UAS operators are required to register and pay a fee under Part 107 rules, the majority of UAS operations occur outside of airports where operators are free to fly without recording or reporting activities such as number of flights conducted, duration of flights, and flight locations. To meet this need and evaluate operational characteristics, the FAA conducts the Survey of UAS Operators, an annual survey of registered UAS operators.¹

The survey relies on two UAS registries for its sample frame: the Part 107 registry and the recreational (section 44809) UAS registry. The Part 107 registry broadly covers operators of UAS less than 55 lb who are operating for work, business, school, non-profit, mixed purposes, and nearly all other purposes.² The section 44809 registry covers operators who fly UAS under 55 lb for exclusively recreational purposes.³ Broadly, section 44809 serves as a limited statutory exemption providing a lower burden and simplified path to compliant operations in the NAS for individuals who fly exclusively for recreation. Part 107 operators have a larger burden compared to section 44809 operators but are afforded more flexibility in operation purpose, operation type, and ability to apply for waivers. These two registries cover the majority, though not all, of small UAS operators within the NAS.

¹The survey began in 2021 with a baseline of UAS activities and has continued annually through the present. The survey is approved through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB Control #2120-0797) and the FAA privacy office, thereby satisfying statutory requirements for federal information collections and maintaining safety around the privacy of the respondents.

² See https://www.faa.gov/uas/commercial_operators

³ See https://www.faa.gov/uas/recreational_flyers

Both the recreational and Part 107 registries require an email address, physical address, and mailing address of the registrant upon registration. The Part 107 registry is asset (UAS) based requiring registration of individual UAS while the recreational registry is operator based and asset registration is required for some but not all UAS. This information enables a stratified random sample survey methodology, a sampling procedure that balances public burden and government cost against the need for accurate data to generate estimates and forecasts.

In 2025 the FAA methodologically defined a survey sample cell as a distinct subgroup using three strata. First, operator type defined as section 44809 or Part 107, second, geography defined as U.S. county (or equivalent), and third, asset class defined as less than or equal to 2 registered UAS or greater than 2 registered UAS.

The 2025 survey implemented 3 major improvements to the sampling methodology aimed at allowing more accurate generalization and improved estimation. First, the asset class stratum was added based on findings from previous survey iterations that revealed systematic differences in flight behavior based on number of UAS reported, the capture of which enabled better estimation of distinct group behaviors. Second, the sample cell size tripled to balance the targeted response rate and historical response rate thereby enabling more stable estimates at a granular level. Finally, the third major improvement was the inclusion of a “foreign operator” sub-sample, a group which was previously excluded from the survey that now enables insights into the domestic activities of operators registered with a foreign address and who reside primarily outside of the United States.

Some survey cells had fewer active registrants than the sampling target; in these cases all eligible registrants were sampled. This is primarily a result of 2 factors. First, the granularity of the geography strata, i.e., many counties do not have sufficient active registrants of a specific operator type and asset class. Second, since the initial survey administration, a permanent opt-out option has been included that has generated a blacklist of registrants who are removed from the sample. Therefore, in certain cells this may have resulted in the sampling of all available registrants.

The 2025 survey was released on a rolling basis and allowed respondents between 60 and 63 days to respond. The first tranche of surveys was available on January 8th, 2026 with the final collection ending April 13th, 2026. The sole recruitment method for the survey was emailed invitations consisting of an initial invitation and periodic reminders to those who had not yet responded. Administration of the survey was achieved by using a GSA approved survey platform.⁴ Around 320,000 invitations were sent to active UAS registrants. Just under 70,000 registrants responded to the survey yielding a 21.6 percent response rate overall, with participation varying slightly by operator type, 22.9 percent for section 44809 registrants and 20.8 percent for Part 107 registrants. This difference in response rate by operator type is consistent with previous survey administrations. The response rate for foreign operators was

⁴The survey platform [see <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>] is approved by the Government Services Administration (GSA) and provides a fast and cost-effective method for designing, deploying, and organizing a questionnaire. Given the internet-based registration for UAS operators, an internet-based questionnaire was best suited for this population.

noticeably lower at 14 percent. The respondents had broad domestic geographic representation with 2,193 counties, all 50 states, and 8 state equivalents. Respondents from the foreign operator sub-sample hailed from 100 distinct countries.

The survey contained between 6 and 40 questions, tailored to each respondent's operator type and prior answers. Given the complex nature of some UAS activity, the survey employed branching logic to ensure a specific type of operator received the appropriate questions. The standard format of the questions provided for optional responses, with required responses only used where necessary. Periodically, the survey asked an open-ended question soliciting general feedback about the survey and specific questions. The average time to complete the survey was approximately 10 minutes.

Section 44809 registrants received questions related to their recreational activity and Part 107 registrants received questions relating to their nonrecreational activity, except for Part 107 registrants who indicated exclusive recreational activity, termed “recreational only”, who then received questions about their recreational activity. Foreign registrants also received a survey based on their registry, however, some questions were removed or altered to account for their foreign status. Additionally, the language used in the survey questions was tailored to either recreational or nonrecreational operations.

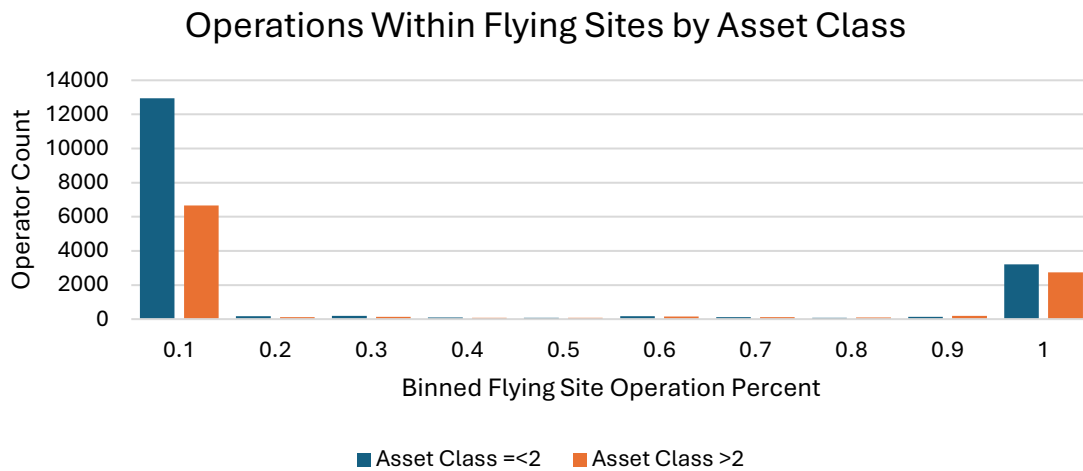
All respondents were asked their total number of flights conducted in 2025, defined as a takeoff and a subsequent landing. Respondents from the section 44089 registry were asked to report their total number of recreational flights and how many of these flights were conducted in a “flying site” defined as a FAA-Recognized Identification Areas (FRIAs)⁵ or Recreational Flyer Fixed Sites⁶. At the end of 2025 FRIAs numbered 2,655 and Recreational Flyer Fixed Sites numbered 2,172, though a single physical location often carries both designations.

To better differentiate section 44809 operators, the analysis considered operational activity outside and within flying sites. Figure 1 shows the distribution of section 44809 operators by asset class as a function of what percent of their flights were conducted in a flying site. Congruent with the 2024 survey, a clear bimodal distribution emerges with two distinct groups at the limits, those who operate inside a flying site and those who operate outside flying sites, with 92.7 percent of operators falling between 0 and 10 percent or 90 and 100 percent. To better differentiate these operators two categories are used; first, “outside flying site” respondents who operated greater than 50 percent of their flights outside a flying site, and second, “inside flying site” respondents who operated 50 percent or greater of their flights within a flying site. The asset strata reveals a difference with the larger than 2 asset class indicating 31.9 percent inside flying site operators vs 21.6 percent for the smaller asset class. This finding is congruent with the logic that inside flying site operators are more likely to be model aircraft operators.

⁵ A FAA-Recognized Identification Areas (FRIAs) is a defined geographic area where drones can be flown if they don't have Remote ID equipment. FRIAs are often used by community organizations and educational intuitions. [see https://www.faa.gov/uas/getting_started/remote_id/fria]

⁶ See <https://udds-faa.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/faa::recreational-flyer-fixed-sites/explore?location=41.453761%2C-112.811605%2C3&showTable=true>

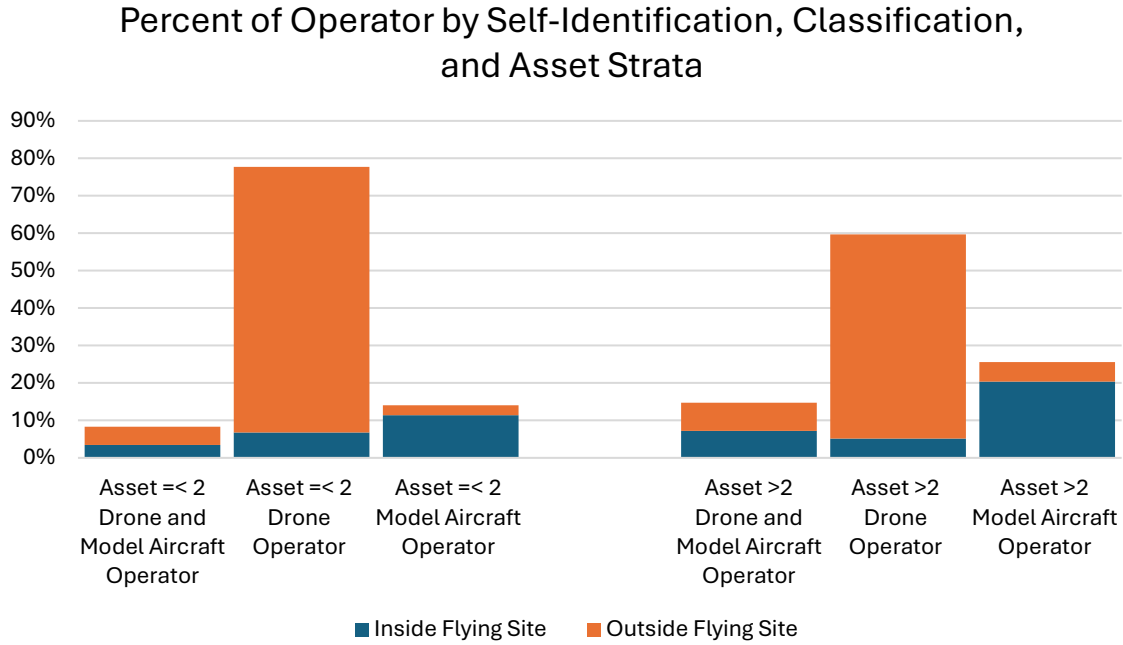
Figure 1 Count of Section 44809 Respondents by Percent Operations Within Flying Sites



*Bin labels indicate the upper limit of each range, i.e. bin 0.2 covers $0.1 \leq x < 0.2$

Section 44809 respondents also self-identified as drone operators, model aircraft operators, both drone and model aircraft operators, or as neither. This distinction was added in 2023 in response to feedback and proved useful in parsing the operational characteristics of section 44809 operators. Figure 2 shows the relationship between the self-identification question, the classification based on flying site operations, and the asset strata. The relationship between these factors illuminates several patterns. Notably, 70.8 percent of respondents identify as drone operators, with that percentage changing as a function of asset group with 77.7 percent of the lower asset group and 59.7 percent of the higher asset group. Model aircraft operators represent 25.6 percent of the high asset group and only 14.0 percent of the low asset group. Additionally, model aircraft operators are substantially more likely to be classified as inside flying site operators, 80.4 percent as compared to their self-identified drone operator counterparts at 8.7 percent.

Figure 2 Percent of Operators by Self-Identification, Classification, and Asset Strata



The operational flying site classification and the asset class strata further illuminate distinctions between annual flights conducted, UAS owned, UAS operated, airframe type, and take-off weight category characteristics (Table 2). Generally, section 44809 operators in the larger asset class conducted more annual flights, owned more UAS, and operated more UAS than operators in the smaller asset class, while both groups had similar operating altitudes and time. Inside flying site operators conducted far more flights (3.0 times), owned more UAS (4.5 times), operated more UAS (4.3 times), flew at a higher average altitude, and operated for shorter periods of time when compared to outside flying site operators.

Table 2 Section 44809 Annual Characteristics

Average Annual Characteristics	Inside Flying Site	Outside Flying Site	Asset <=2	Asset >2
Flights	134	44	46	75
Altitude (AGL; feet)	234	188	198	202
Flight Time (min)	12	18	17	16
Aircraft Owned	12.8	2.9	3.9	6.6
Aircraft Operated	10.7	2.5	3.7	6.2
Fixed Wing UAS Operated	9.19	0.55	2.21	3.87
Quadcopter UAS Operated	1.11	1.73	1.35	1.90
Hexacopter UAS Operated	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.03
Octocopter UAS Operated	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02

Average Annual Characteristics	Inside Flying Site	Outside Flying Site	Asset =<2	Asset >2
Rotary Wing UAS Operated	0.62	0.10	0.15	0.37
Other UAS Airframe Operated	0.10	0.02	0.03	0.06
UAS Less Than 0.55 lb Operated	1.29	1.19	0.88	1.74
UAS 0.5 lb to Less Than 5 lb Operated	3.80	1.32	1.59	2.60
UAS 5 lb to Less Than 15 lb Operated	3.16	0.17	0.75	1.30
UAS 15 to Less Than 25 lb Operated	0.73	0.02	0.17	0.27
UAS 25 to Less Than 55 lb Operated	0.43	0.01	0.08	0.18
UAS 55 lb or Greater Operated	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.01

Part 107 operators have diverse operations and were asked how many nonrecreational flights and how many recreational flights they performed in 2025 at the start of the survey. The answer to these questions served to classify Part 107 operators. Operators who reported at least 1 nonrecreational flight were classified as “core” Part 107 operators (65.9%, n=13,901), operators who reported 0 nonrecreational and at least 1 recreational flight were classified as “recreational only” operators (26.6%, n=5,601), and operators who reported 0 flights were considered “non-operational” (7.5%, n=1590). Core Part 107 operators are of primary interest to the FAA as this group is conducting nonrecreational flights, however, the large percentage of recreational only Part 107 operators remains of interest.

Table 3 shows characteristics of annual flights conducted, aircraft owned, aircraft operated, airframe type operated, and take-off weight category by Part 107 classification and asset class. Consistent with previous surveys, core Part 107 operators had more annual flights than recreational only Part 107 and section 44809 operators. New analysis of the asset class reveals a substantial difference with operators in the larger asset class reporting nearly 5 times as many flights as those in the smaller asset class and 3.3 times as many aircraft owned. Recreational only Part 107 operators closely resemble section 44809 operators in the lower asset class with respect to annual flights conducted while reporting owning and operating fewer aircraft.

Table 3 Part 107 Annual Characteristics

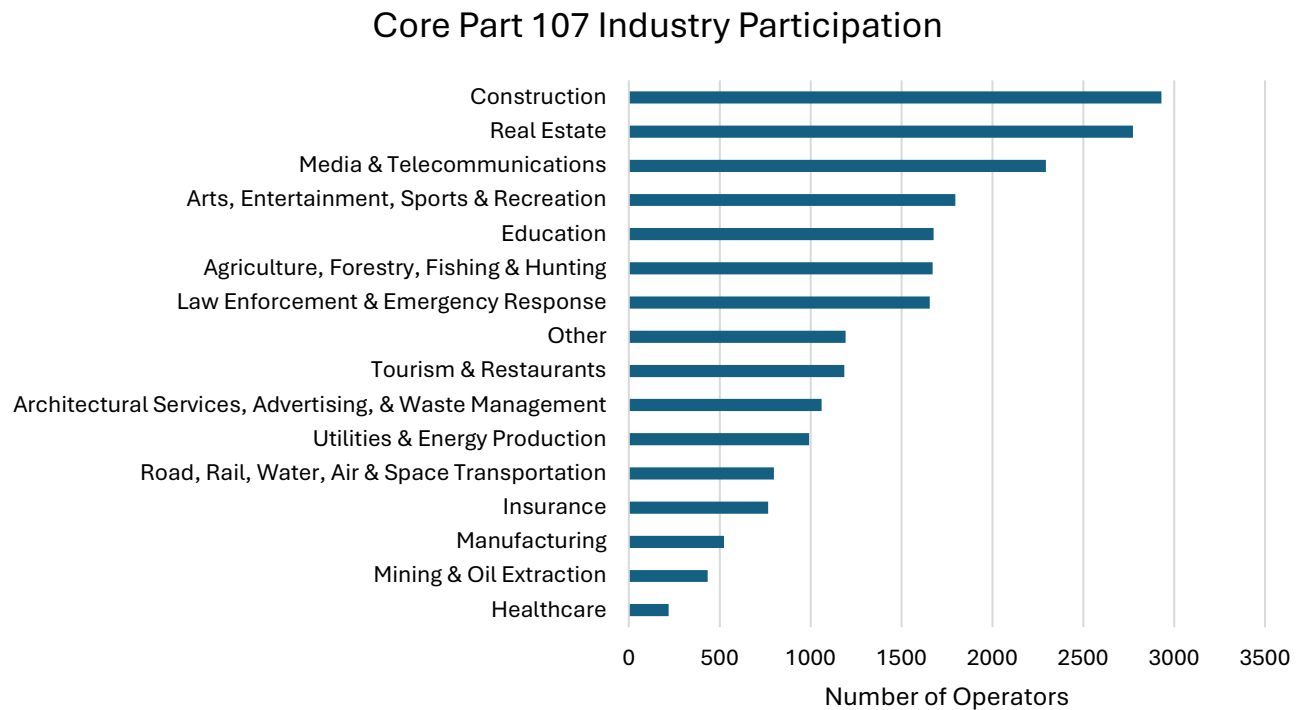
Average Annual Characteristics	Core Part 107	Recreational Only	Asset =<2	Asset >2
Nonrecreational Flights	206	0	69	341
Recreational Flights	33	46	24	65
Altitude (AGL; feet)	224	204	215	228
Flight Time (min)	24	30	25	27
Aircraft Owned	5.3	2.1	2.6	8.6
Aircraft Operated	4.0	1.8	2.4	6.2
Fixed Wing UAS Operated	0.10	0.42	0.16	0.28

Average Annual Characteristics	Core Part 107	Recreational Only	Asset =<2	Asset >2
Quadcopter UAS Operated	5.81	1.49	3.44	7.48
Hexacopter UAS Operated	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.10
Octocopter UAS Operated	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.04
Rotary Wing UAS Operated	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.05
Other Airframe UAS Operated	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03
UAS Less Than 0.55 lb Operated	1.10	0.80	0.67	2.00
UAS 0.5 lb to Less Than 5 lb Operated	3.27	1.00	1.57	5.50
UAS 5 lb to Less Than 15 lb Operated	0.64	0.20	0.27	1.19
UAS 15 to Less Than 25 lb Operated	0.15	0.03	0.07	0.23
UAS 25 to Less Than 55 lb Operated	0.16	0.02	0.07	0.25
UAS 55 lb or Greater Operated	0.09	0.00	0.04	0.15

To better identify the commercial sectors in which the core Part 107 operators participate, respondents selected industries in which they are active using a 5-point Likert scale. Figure 3 shows the counts of respondents selected either “somewhat active”, “active”, or “very active” from this scale and were therefore defined as active. Consistent with 2024 findings, construction and real estate remained the most common industries, with 2,930 respondents indicating activity in construction and 2,773 indicating activity in real estate. Relationships between industry and UAS weights also exist. For example, 87.0 percent of core Part 107 operators who reported operating a UAS 55 lb or greater reported activity in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting category as compared to 20.8 percent of all core Part 107 operators. This finding is consistent with the general growth of large UAS for agriculture. Notably, additional requirements apply when operating UAS greater than 55 lb or for certain activity such as distributing economic poisons.⁷ These operators however, are often registered in the Part 107 registry and report these operations on the survey.

⁷ See https://www.faa.gov/uas/advanced_operations/dispersing_chemicals

Figure 3 Number of Core Part 107 Operators Indicating Activity in Particular Industries



Another finding consistent with previous survey administrations shows that many operators simply do not conduct any flights, despite their active registrations. These non-active operators are more common in the section 44809 registry as compared the Part 107, and are more common in the lower asset class (Table 4).

Table 4 Non-active Operators by Survey Section

Survey Section	Operators Reporting Zero Annual Flights
44809 All	15.1%
44809 Asset Class =<2	17.0%
44809 Asset Class >2	11.7%
Part 107 All	7.5%
Part 107 Asset Class =<2	9.2%
Part 107 Asset Class >2	2.4%

Population weighting was conducted to estimate the total number of flights and total flight time in 2025. The weighting process was adjusted in 2025 from 2024 to take advantage of the new asset class strata enabling more accurate estimates. Previous survey data revealed that operators with more than 2 UAS conducted substantially more flights than operators with 2 or fewer UAS, and that these operators are less frequent in the registry. By including the asset class strata the survey was better able to capture these operators and accurately estimate their activity.

Given the high number of sample cells resulting from the geography strata, response rates per cell were often too low to generalize. To account for this, a cell clustering technique was employed along the geography strata. Superficially, for each asset class and operator type neighboring counties within a state were combined until the response rate for that cluster of counties equaled or was greater than 30, then the process continued. This collapsed across the defined sections of the geography strata generating local county clusters while maintaining the other strata of operator type and asset class.

More specifically, four parallel clustering processes were employed for every state using the response rate target of 30 respondents. The four parallel clustering processes were defined by the unique intersections of the asset class and operator type strata. Each clustering process followed the same logic. First, for every state or state equivalent if the response rate was less than 30, then all counties were clustered. Where the response rate was greater than 30 for the state each county was assessed, if the county had 30 respondents or more, it was defined as a cluster. Then the county with the highest remaining responses was selected as a seed and was grown by first selecting those counties that share direct topological boundaries, then calculating a Haversine distance between the selected counties spatial centroid and the seeds centroid and selecting the least distance, thereby systematically absorbing the closest geographic county. Clusters grew until the target response rate was met, then the process repeated.

This process generated clusters resolving under the threshold due to the direct topological boundary condition, to address these sub-threshold conditions, clusters were joined to the nearest neighboring cluster using the Haversine distance between cluster centroids. To further address any geographic distortion an iterative spatial optimization technique computes centroids for all valid clusters and evaluates boundary units. When a boundary unit minimizes its spatial variance by reassigning to a neighboring cluster's centroid, a swap is executed if the swap does not cause the source cluster to fall below the target response rate, and the source cluster's topological integrity is preserved. Finally, smallest Haversine distance between centroids was used again to assign sub-threshold isolated clusters that result from 0 shared direct topological boundaries.

To generate population estimates for flights by state, an average number of flights was calculated for each cluster and multiplied by the specific population of that cluster, then aggregated to the state level. To generate population estimates for flight times by state, the population estimate for flights was multiplied by the average flight time using the unique intersections of the asset class and operator type strata, then aggregating.

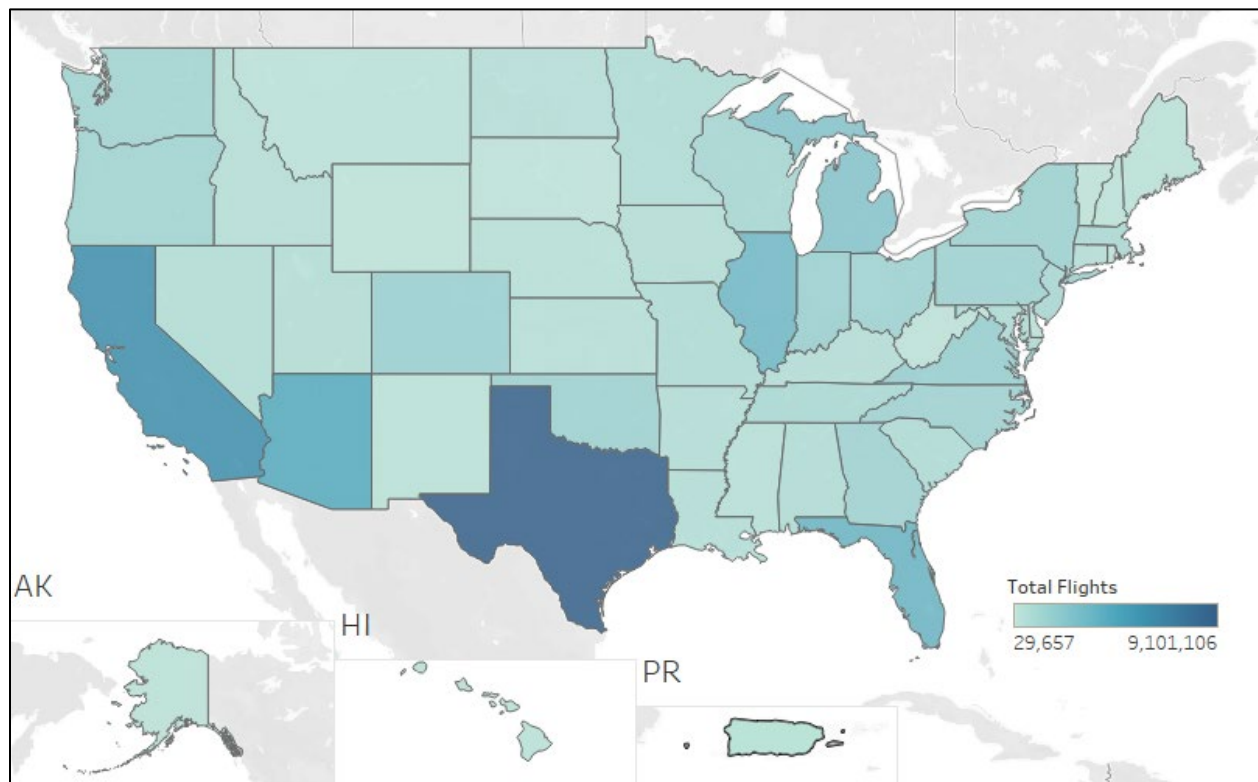
Using this improved sampling and clustering methodology, the FAA estimates that in 2025 around 57.8 million UAS flights occurred accumulating 21.7 million hours of UAS flight (see Table 1, Table 6, and Table 7). Registered Part 107 operators conducted roughly 33.6 million non-recreational flights and 6.4 million recreational flights accounting for 13.6 million and 3.1 million hours of UAS flight time, respectively. Registered section 44809 operators conducted roughly 17.8 million recreational flights totaling 4.9 million hours of UAS flight time; around 50% of these flights were conducted within a flying site. See Figure 4 for a map of estimated total flights by state, Table 6 for estimated total flights by operator type and state, and Table 7 for estimated total hours of UAS flight by operator type and state.

Table 5 National Flight and Flight Time Estimates by Survey Section

Registry	Asset Class	Operations	Flight Time (hours)	Flights
Section 44809	All	All	4,934,748	17,782,154
Section 44809	Asset =<2	Recreational	3,930,872	13,998,728
Section 44809	Asset >2	Recreational	1,003,876	3,783,427
Part 107	All	All	16,742,051	40,054,297
Part 107	Asset =<2	Nonrecreational	6,413,216	16,700,987
Part 107	Asset =<2	Recreational	2,171,302	4,909,004
Part 107	Asset >2	Nonrecreational	7,205,969	16,940,051
Part 107	Asset >2	Recreational	951,563	1,504,255

Due to changes in sampling and clustering methodology, flight estimates from 2024 are not directly comparable to the estimates from 2025. Some considerations include that the improvements made to the survey methodology, including a change to the sampling and weighting procedures, enabled this year's survey to improve the capture and extrapolate data from operators with higher flight counts that in previous years might have gone unreported. Additionally, analysis now holistically includes recreational operations conducted by part 107 operators (6.4 million), a value that was previously addressed separately. Also, the flight estimates now represent flights conducted by operators in that state and do not attempt to consider travel, instead travel is addressed separately.

Figure 4 Population Weighted Flights for Part 107 and Section 44809 Registrants



Considering this, in comparison to 2024, section 44809 flights dropped by just under 4 million flights; this is a similar pattern to the changes observed in registration where section 44809 registrations have dropped.⁸ Part 107 operations show a notable increase in estimated flights in 2025 as compared to 2024. This increase reflects improved methodology, enhancing the capture and estimation of operator flights, and continued growth in industries that have come to rely on high numbers of UAS flights.

Table 6 Population Weighted Flight Estimates by State

State	Total Flights	Section 44809 Flights	Part 107 Flights
Alaska	209,488	130,954	78,534
Alabama	590,241	174,950	415,291
Arkansas	480,725	109,387	371,338
Arizona	4,298,258	530,844	3,767,414
California	6,053,076	2,164,615	3,888,461

⁸ See the Compendium to FAA Aerospace Forecast 2026-2046. Emerging Aviation Entrants: Unmanned Aircraft Systems & Advanced Air Mobility;
https://www.faa.gov/data_research/aviation/aerospace_forecasts/uas-compendium.pdf

State	Total Flights	Section 44809 Flights	Part 107 Flights
Colorado	1,535,865	409,774	1,126,091
Connecticut	450,199	232,536	217,663
District of Columbia	29,657	14,269	15,388
Delaware	97,179	51,690	45,489
Florida	3,502,920	1,702,957	1,799,963
Georgia	1,308,159	520,255	787,903
Hawaii	220,301	108,105	112,196
Iowa	523,132	136,251	386,881
Idaho	421,398	90,819	330,579
Illinois	3,300,572	499,309	2,801,263
Indiana	1,520,463	320,742	1,199,721
Kansas	408,184	207,810	200,374
Kentucky	439,507	209,093	230,414
Louisiana	487,322	143,231	344,091
Massachusetts	794,445	350,997	443,447
Maryland	656,444	265,136	391,308
Maine	193,807	124,039	69,767
Michigan	2,373,915	403,997	1,969,917
Minnesota	618,692	219,830	398,862
Missouri	656,103	268,116	387,986
Mississippi	338,322	90,258	248,065
Montana	178,771	90,905	87,865
North Carolina	1,317,999	483,234	834,765
North Dakota	433,441	85,928	347,513
Nebraska	361,462	69,929	291,533
New Hampshire	162,929	96,664	66,265
New Jersey	910,095	582,234	327,861
New Mexico	227,372	121,747	105,625
Nevada	560,175	306,284	253,891
New York	1,366,899	690,618	676,281
Ohio	1,345,105	709,551	635,554
Oklahoma	1,402,352	153,118	1,249,234
Oregon	1,228,861	300,432	928,429
Pennsylvania	1,346,424	555,160	791,264
Puerto Rico	75,751	11,604	64,147

State	Total Flights	Section 44809 Flights	Part 107 Flights
Rhode Island	53,775	26,944	26,831
South Carolina	671,666	324,119	347,547
South Dakota	130,042	57,386	72,656
Tennessee	839,731	475,269	364,462
Texas	9,101,106	1,206,266	7,894,840
Utah	538,915	226,569	312,346
Virginia	1,646,290	612,983	1,033,308
Vermont	58,810	32,316	26,493
Washington	1,165,883	690,832	475,051
Wisconsin	1,014,399	306,999	707,400
West Virginia	108,798	44,584	64,215
Wyoming	81,030	40,516	40,514
Total (sum)	57,836,452	17,782,154	40,054,297

Table 7 Population Weighted Flight Time Estimates by State

State	Total Flight Time (hours)	Section 44809 Flight Time (hours)	Part 107 Flight Time (hours)
Alaska	63,659	34,890	28,769
Alabama	195,868	50,298	145,570
Arkansas	171,027	29,086	141,941
Arizona	1,661,673	144,994	1,516,679
California	2,092,855	556,009	1,536,846
Colorado	561,633	126,085	435,548
Connecticut	176,983	62,176	114,807
District of Columbia	9,462	3,279	6,183
Delaware	31,132	12,951	18,181
Florida	1,549,357	494,724	1,054,632
Georgia	465,220	153,445	311,775
Hawaii	91,618	52,660	38,957
Iowa	175,062	38,215	136,847
Idaho	145,257	25,225	120,032
Illinois	1,147,738	121,635	1,026,103
Indiana	559,586	83,626	475,960
Kansas	124,754	54,613	70,141

State	Total Flight Time (hours)	Section 44809 Flight Time (hours)	Part 107 Flight Time (hours)
Kentucky	145,853	64,591	81,262
Louisiana	182,416	42,393	140,023
Massachusetts	330,122	94,285	235,837
Maryland	211,347	72,203	139,144
Maine	61,304	35,501	25,803
Michigan	872,285	108,993	763,292
Minnesota	197,754	55,143	142,611
Missouri	205,601	66,571	139,031
Mississippi	140,384	28,672	111,712
Montana	58,624	26,785	31,838
North Carolina	440,938	136,555	304,383
North Dakota	156,447	24,342	132,105
Nebraska	117,316	19,172	98,144
New Hampshire	50,224	26,158	24,067
New Jersey	300,082	178,227	121,855
New Mexico	81,135	37,474	43,661
Nevada	179,650	83,790	95,860
New York	455,753	190,232	265,522
Ohio	424,799	188,342	236,457
Oklahoma	626,548	49,885	576,663
Oregon	399,667	89,264	310,403
Pennsylvania	491,836	153,588	338,249
Puerto Rico	223,052	5,656	217,396
Rhode Island	17,606	8,522	9,084
South Carolina	235,976	87,053	148,923
South Dakota	47,522	15,549	31,974
Tennessee	340,728	134,003	206,725
Texas	3,775,013	330,304	3,444,709
Utah	238,296	65,195	173,102
Virginia	644,209	184,083	460,126
Vermont	19,457	10,789	8,668
Washington	348,397	176,149	172,247
Wisconsin	369,696	78,168	291,528
West Virginia	38,725	12,735	25,989
Wyoming	25,149	10,462	14,688

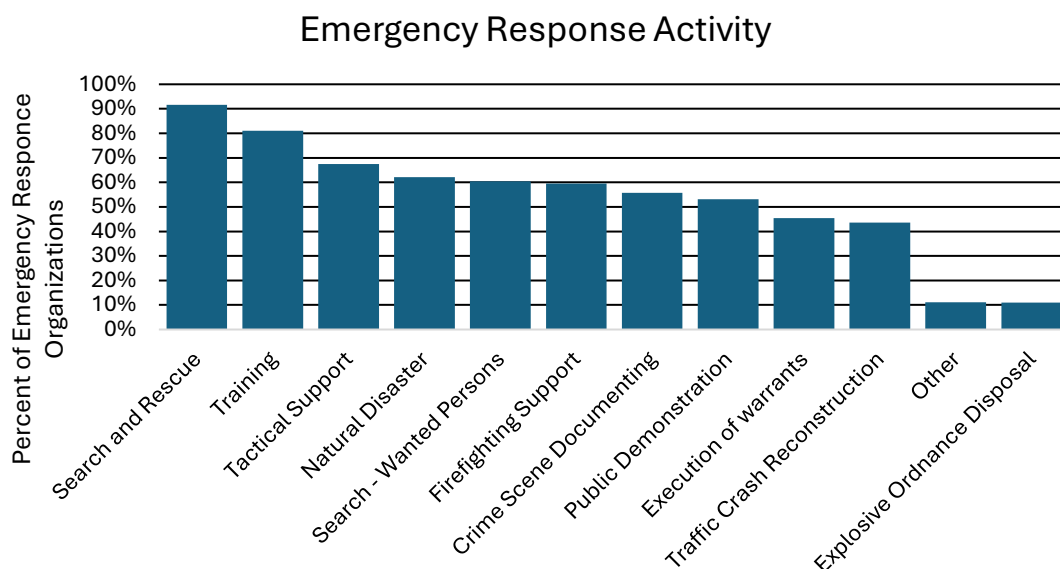
State	Total Flight Time (hours)	Section 44809 Flight Time (hours)	Part 107 Flight Time (hours)
Total (sum)	21,676,799	4,934,748	16,742,051

One group of particular interest in the Part 107 respondents is the emergency response organizations. Over 1,000 Part 107 registrants indicated that they operate UAS for an emergency response organization (police department, fire department, or search and rescue agency) and that their organization has an unmanned aircraft system (Table 8). The average age of these organizations was reported to be four and half years with forty percent reporting that they collaborate and share the UAS program with another organization, a value unchanged from the 2024 survey. Asset class played a role in differentiating emergency response groups with operators in the larger asset class conducting over 2.3 times the annual flights. In total, these organizations reported conducting nearly 359,728 emergency response operations in 2025, this value is significantly greater than 2024 and is likely a direct result of the increased sampling. However, the average annual flights increased by 1.6 times from 131 in 2024 to 346 in 2025, suggesting that emergency response organizations are conducting more annual operations. Due to a lack of population figures, estimation of total emergency response operations is not currently possible. Figure 5 shows the types of operations in which these agencies are involved, with over 90 percent using UAS for search and rescue operations.

Table 8 Emergency Response Program Information

Emergency Response	Asset Class ≤2	Asset Class >2	All ER
Organizations Responding	571	475	1046
Program Life (years)	3.9	5.2	4.5
Number of Pilots	7	10	8
Annual Flights	215	498	346
Percent Shared Program	40.4%	40.9%	40.6%

Figure 5 Percent of Emergency Response Groups Indicating Engagement by Activity Type



For economic analysis and UAS forecasting, the average operational life of a UAS is important to understand. As such, respondents reported the operational life of decommissioned UAS with decommissioning defined as disassembly, parted out, defective or damaged beyond use, scrapped, or became obsolete. Figure 6 compares the decommissioning rate of Part 107 operators and section 44809 operators. Part 107 operators reported an average operational life of 3.0 years (median of 3 years), with a maximum life of 22 years, and minimum of 1 day, while section 44809 operators reported an average operational life of 3.1 years (median of 2 year), with a maximum life of 40 years, and minimum of 1 day. The cumulative decommission plot reveals the same pattern found in 2024, that section 44809 operators are more likely to decommission UAS in the initial years compared to Part 107 operators, however, section 44809 operators are more likely to delay decommissioning in later years. This pattern can be seen by considering three time points; first, year 1 where almost 50 percent of section 44809 decommissions have occurred but only around 35 percent of Part 107 decommissions; second, year 4 where in both groups roughly 75 percent of decommissions have occurred; third, year 10 where 95.5 percent of section 44809 decommissions have occurred and 99.6 percent of Part 107 decommissions. Table 9 provides the average operational time for a UAS before decommissioning for different survey sections. Though some differences exist, generally the average operational life of UAS appears consistent.

Figure 6 Cumulative Decommissioning by Registry

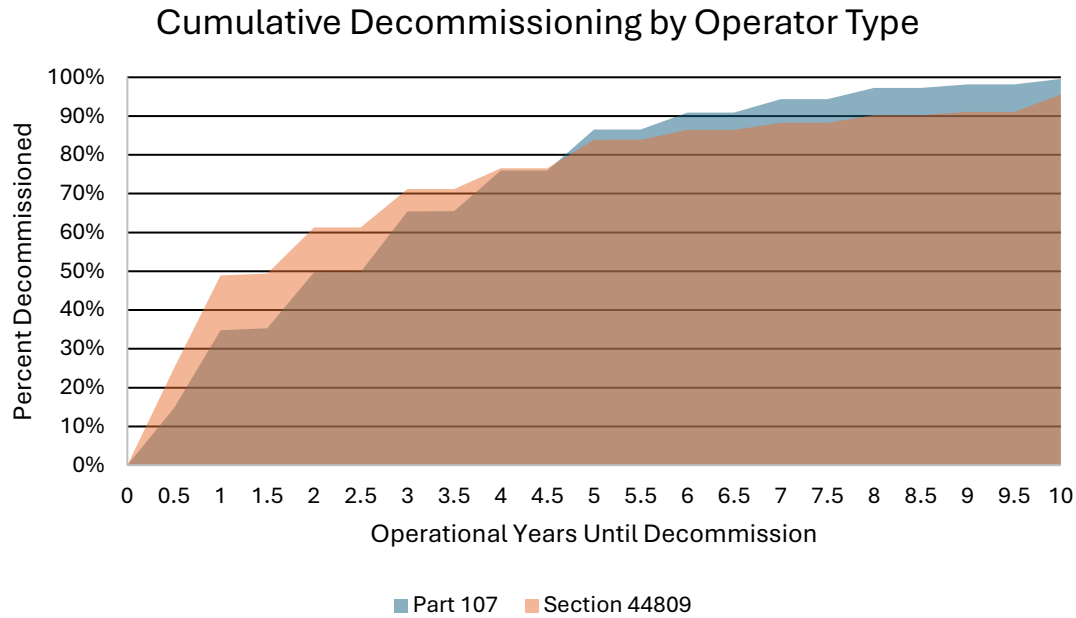


Table 9 Average Time to Decommission UAS by Survey Section

Survey Section	Average Time to Decommission (years)
Part 107 All	3.0
Part 107 Asset ≤2	2.8
Part 107 Asset >2	3.1
Part 107 Core Operators	3.1
Part 107 Recreational Operations Only	2.4
Section 44809 All	3.2
Section 44809 Asset ≤2	3.3
Section 44809 Asset >2	3.1
Section 44809 Outside Flying Site Operators	2.9
Section 44809 Inside Flying Site Operators	3.2

Generally, regulation allows UAS operators to travel and operate their UAS. As such, respondents were asked to indicate if they had traveled outside of their home county and state to conduct flights (Table 10). Nearly one in four respondents indicated traveling outside of their home state to operate UAS with 23.3 percent of section 44809 operators and 26.7 percent of Part 107 operators indicating that they had. Traveling within state to other counties had the same occurrence rate for section 44809 operators, 23.3 percent, while a larger amount, 38.6 percent, of Part 107 operators indicated within state travel. Operators in the greater than 2 asset class

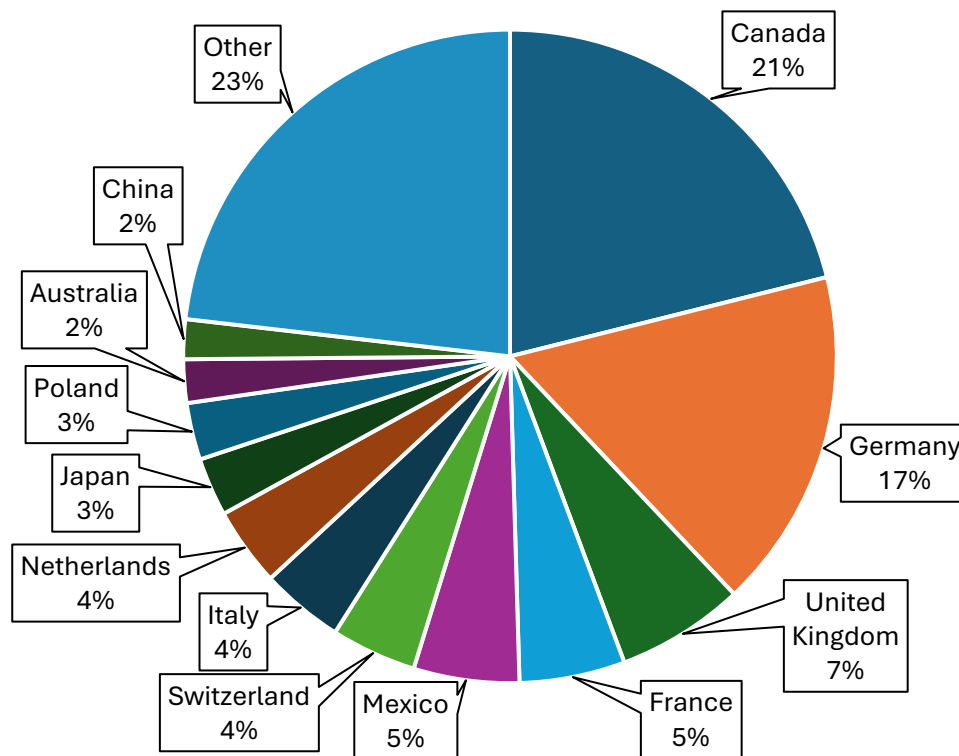
indicated more travel than operators in the 2 or fewer asset class. Generally, Part 107 operators indicated more travel than section 44809 operators.

Table 10 Percent of Respondents Operating Beyond Their Home County

Survey Section	Traveled Out of State	Traveled Out of County
Part 107 ≤ 2 Assets	23.9%	35.7%
Part 107 > 2 Assets	35.3%	48.1%
Part 107 Core	27.4%	46.4%
Part 107 Recreational Only	25.2%	22.3%
Section 44809 ≤ 2 Assets	22.0%	21.5%
Section 44809 > 2 Assets	25.3%	26.1%
Section 44809 Inside Flying Site	21.4%	24.8%
Section 44809 Outside Flying Site	24.2%	23.0%

To address the Administration’s interest in foreign-manufactured drones, the 2025 survey established “foreign operators” as a sub-population. For the explicit purpose of the survey, this was defined as those with a registered foreign address who primarily reside outside of the United States. The sample was generated by filtering registrants who provided an address within FAA Drone Zone outside of the United States. Additionally, filtered participants were asked if their primary residence was outside the United States. Respondents who were filtered and answered “yes” to this question were defined as foreign operators for the purpose of this survey. This group yielded a lower response rate of 14 percent, when compared to the other sample groups. While respondents from this group spanned 100 countries, over 50 percent originated from just 5 nations: Canada (21.1 percent), Germany (16.9 percent), the United Kingdom (6.3 percent), France (5.2 percent), and Mexico (5.2 percent), with all remaining countries accounting for less than 5 percent of foreign operators each (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Foreign Operator Country of Origin



Foreign operators primarily reported traveling to California, Florida, and Arizona (Table 11). Foreign section 44809 operators were more likely to operate outside of designated flying sites compared to domestic operators, with 85 percent falling into this category. In addition, 90 percent identified as drone and not model aircraft operators and 4 percent as model aircraft and not drone operators, a larger difference when compared to domestic operators. Among foreign Part 107 registrants, 41 percent reported conducting zero flights in 2025, far exceeding the 8 percent inactivity rate reported by domestic Part 107 operators. Generally, foreign operators who did fly reported fewer annual flights than their domestic counterparts.

Table 11 Percent of Foreign Operators Who Operated Within Specific States

State	Percent of Foreign Operators
California	20.7%
Florida	14.6%
Arizona	11.9%
Utah	9.6%
Nevada	6.8%

State	Percent of Foreign Operators
Texas	6.1%
Hawaii	5.8%

*This table shows only states where 5 percent or greater of foreign operators indicated traveling

Using the operator type stratum as the only scaler, there were an estimated 638,785 flights performed by foreign operators in 2025, with 426,019 performed by foreign section 44809 registrants and 212,766 by foreign Part 107 registrants.

The 2025 Survey of UAS Operators demonstrates the critical value of refining data collection and analysis to capture the evolving complexity of small drone operations. By tripling the sample size and introducing an asset class stratum the FAA successfully uncovered the outsized impact of high-volume operators. Analysis of the 2025 survey reveals operating groups that are varied, unique, and more differentiable, contrasting the commercial operations of Part 107 registrants in industries like construction and real estate with the distinct flying site behaviors of section 44809 recreational flyers. Ultimately, these enhancements equip the FAA with the granular, reliable data necessary to forecast future fleet activity, evaluate economic impacts, and continue to safely integrate UAS into the NAS.