

# NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
Air Traffic Organization Policy

N JO 7210.931

Effective Date:  
May 21, 2021

Cancellation Date:  
December 2, 2021

**SUBJ:** Reporting Suspicious UAS Activity

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- 1. Purpose of This Notice.** This notice provides additional guidance to FAA Order JO 7210.3, Facility Operation and Administration, paragraphs 2-1-32, Reporting Unauthorized, Hazardous, or Suspicious UAS Activities, 2-1-33, Use of UAS Detection Systems, 2-1-34, Use of Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS), and 2-2-4, Duty Familiarization and The Transfer of Position Responsibility.
- 2. Audience.** This notice applies to the following Air Traffic Organization (ATO) service units: Air Traffic Services, Mission Support Services, System Operations, Safety and Technical Training; Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service; William J. Hughes Technical Center; and Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.
- 3. Where Can I Find This Notice?** This notice is available on the MyFAA employee website at [https://employees.faa.gov/tools\\_resources/orders\\_notices/](https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices/) and on the air traffic publications website at [http://www.faa.gov/air\\_traffic/publications/](http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/).
- 4. Cancellation.** This notice cancels the previously issued N JO 7210.928, which was effective December 31, 2020.
- 5. Explanation of Policy Change.** This change renames paragraph 2-1-32 to Reporting Suspicious UAS Activities, and requires ATC facilities to create a checklist for reporting suspicious UAS activity. In addition, the change adds two new paragraphs regarding the use of UAS Detection Systems and Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS), and adds UAS activity of operational importance to paragraph 2-2-4 as an item on position relief checklists.
- 6. Procedures/Responsibilities/Action.** Amend FAA Order JO 7210.3 by changing paragraphs, 2-1-32, and 2-2-4, and inserting new paragraphs 2-1-33, 2-1-34, as follows:

## 2-1-32. REPORTING SUSPICIOUS UAS ACTIVITIES

Consistent with the provisions of Air Traffic Service, Duty, and Operational Priorities, all Air Traffic Control facilities, FAA Contract Towers, and Flight Service Stations must report suspicious UAS. Suspicious UAS operations may include operating without authorization; loitering in the vicinity of sensitive locations (e.g., national security and law enforcement facilities and critical infrastructure); or disrupting normal air traffic operations resulting in runway changes, ground stops, pilot evasive action, etc. Reports of a UAS operation alone do not constitute suspicious activity. Development of a comprehensive list of suspicious activities is not possible due to the vast number of situations that could be considered suspicious. ATC must exercise sound judgment when identifying situations that could constitute or indicate a suspicious activity.

- a.** Notify local authorities (e.g., airport/local law enforcement; airport operations; and/or the responsible Federal Security Director Coordination Center) in accordance with local facility directives, including Letters of Agreement with the airport owner/operator.
- b.** Report the incident to the Domestic Events Network (DEN) Air Traffic Security Coordinator (ATSC).
- c.** Record the incident via the Comprehensive Electronic Data Analysis and Reporting (CEDAR) program or, if CEDAR is not available, via the appropriate means, in accordance with FAA Order JO 7210.632, Air Traffic Organization Occurrence Reporting.
- d.** Notify the air traffic manager.
- e.** Provide the following information when reporting the incident via the DEN and CEDAR:
  - 1.** UTC date and time of incident.
  - 2.** Reporting source(s).
  - 3.** Position: fixed radial distance, bearing and distance, or landmark, altitude, and heading.
  - 4.** Flight behavior (i.e., loitering, headed toward airport).
  - 5.** UAS type (e.g. quadcopter, fixed wing), if known.
  - 6.** Report operational impacts in accordance with paragraph 21-4-1, Domestic Events Network (DEN), of this order.
- f.** Attempt to obtain additional information relevant to the suspicious UAS including:
  - 1.** Size and color.
  - 2.** Number of reported/sighted UAS.
  - 3.** Location of the person(s) operating the UAS.
  - 4.** Remote pilot information including, name, address, and phone number, if obtained by local authorities or other verifiable means.
- g.** Facilities must maintain a checklist that provides guidance on Reporting Suspicious UAS Activities. At a minimum, this checklist must be available to Operations Supervisors (OS), Controller-in-Charge (CIC), and Operations Manager (OM) personnel. Facilities must consider the following for inclusion on the checklist:
  - 1.** Items a. through f. of this paragraph.
  - 2.** Contact information necessary for completing the notification requirements of this paragraph.
  - 3.** Local factors that may be necessary in determining if an operation is suspicious (e.g., location of critical infrastructure).

4. A requirement to notify the Regional Operations Center (ROC) for security-related events that may generate significant media or congressional interest as required by FAA Order JO 1030.3.

5. Other information as deemed necessary by the air traffic manager.

**REFERENCE-**

*FAA Order JO 7110.65, Para 2-1-2, Duty Priority.*

*FAA Order JO 7610.4, Para 7-3-1, Application.*

*FAA Order JO 1030.3, Initial Event Response, Chapter 2, Upward Notification.*

*FAA Order JO 7210.632, Air Traffic Organization Occurrence Reporting.*

*Advisory Circular 91-57B, Exception for Limited Recreational Operations of Unmanned Aircraft.*

*Pilot Controller Glossary Term- Suspicious UAS.*

No further changes to paragraph

## **2-1-33. USE OF UAS DETECTION SYSTEMS**

Airport owners/operators or local enforcement may contact ATC facilities to coordinate their acquisition, testing, and operational use of UAS detection systems. These systems and how they are used may have implications for FAA regulations for airports; potentially affect ATC and other Air Navigation Services systems (e.g., RF interference with radars); and/or trigger airport responses (e.g., closing runways), which must be coordinated with ATC.

a. Requests by airport authorities for ATC facility cooperation/authorization in the acquisition, testing, or use of UAS detection systems will be referred to the appropriate FAA Airports District Office (ADO). The ADO will initiate internal FAA coordination, including reviews by the responsible ATO offices and facilities.

b. ATC facilities will not enter into any verbal or written agreement with a commercial vendor or an airport authority regarding UAS detection capabilities without prior coordination and approval from HQ-AJT-0.

**NOTE-**

1. *UAS detection systems do not include the interdiction components that characterize UAS mitigation technologies, also referred to as Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) technologies. Only select Federal Departments and Agencies have the legal authority to use C-UAS systems in the NAS. The FAA does not support the use of this technology by other entities without this explicit, legal authorization.*

2. *The FAA does not advocate the use of UAS detection in the airport environment until appropriate policy and procedures are developed..*

No further changes to paragraph

## **2-1-34. USE OF COUNTER UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (C-UAS)**

Select Departments and Agencies, which have been legally authorized to use this technology, are operationally using Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) in the NAS to protect certain facilities and assets. C-UAS systems are capable of disabling, disrupting, or seizing control of a suspicious UAS, and may integrate or be linked to UAS detection capabilities. These

Departments and Agencies are required to coordinate with the FAA to assess and mitigate risks to the NAS posed by these C-UAS systems. These systems and their deployment may affect ATC and other Air Navigation Services systems (e.g., RF interference with radars); which could impact other air traffic in the vicinity including legitimate, compliant UAS flights. Additionally, C-UAS may involve the response and deployment of ground/airborne operational security assets, which must be coordinated with ATC.

**a.** The Joint Air Traffic Operations Command (JATOC) Air Traffic Security Coordinator (ATSC) team, which manages the Domestic Events Network (DEN), must notify affected ATC facilities when C-UAS systems are activated.

**NOTE-**

*Only select Federal Departments/Agencies have been legally authorized to utilize C-UAS to cover certain facilities and assets, and with coordination with the FAA to address risks to the NAS. Risk mitigation for the NAS typically includes notification to potentially affected ATC facilities.*

**b.** The DEN must alert all ATC facilities affected by C-UAS deployment and JATOC National Operations Control Center (NOCC) of any possible operational impacts.

**1.** The alerts will focus on real-time reporting regarding possible operational impacts of C-UAS activities providing the affected facilities with heightened awareness of any potential flight and equipment anomalies; and will allow the facilities to take actions needed to sustain safe operations.

**2.** The alerts must be made via landline communications and must not be broadcast over radios, shout lines, or direct dial lines to the air traffic controllers on position.

**3.** The affected ATC facilities must not discuss C-UAS operations with any outside entity.

Renumber paragraphs 2-1-33 thru 2-1-37 as 2-1-35 thru 2-1-39

No further changes to paragraph

## **2-2-4. DUTY FAMILIARIZATION AND THE TRANSFER OF POSITION RESPONSIBILITY**

Title through subparagraph c1(d)(11), No Change

**(12)** UAS activity of operational importance.

No further changes to paragraph

**7. Distribution.** This notice is distributed to the following ATO service units: Air Traffic Services, Mission Support Services, System Operations, Safety and Technical Training; Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service; William J. Hughes Technical Center; and Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.


**8. Background.** The number of suspected unauthorized UAS operations near airports is on the rise. As a result, many airport authorities are responding to these concerns by looking for ways to detect and mitigate the possible impact of malicious or errant UAS operations. In addition, legislation has granted the Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Department of Justice (DOJ) the legal authorization to use C-UAS capabilities. This same

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legislation requires these departments and their component agencies to coordinate with the FAA to characterize, assess, and, mitigate risks to the NAS. In response to these activities, in 2018 Air Traffic Services (AJT) provided ATC facilities with addinterim guidance, including a facility checklist on how to handle observations of suspicious UAS activity.

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