



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

**ORDER
8800.4**

National Policy

Effective date:
June 11, 2026

SUBJ: Space Launch and Reentry Licensing and Permitting User Fees

1. Purpose of This Order. This order provides an overview of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) policy on Space Launch and Reentry Licensing and Permitting User Fees. In accordance with section 50924 of Title 51 of the United States Code (51 U.S.C.), Congress has directed the Secretary of Transportation to collect space launch and reentry licensing and permitting user fees “on each launch or reentry carried out under a license or permit issued under section 50904 during 2026 or a subsequent year.”

2. Audience. The audience for this order is FAA Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST) and Office of Finance and Management (AFN) personnel involved in the assessment and collection of commercial space launch and reentry licensing and permitting user fees. This order is available to the public for informational purposes only. Its content is not legally binding on the public in its own right and will not be relied upon by the Department as a separate basis for affirmative enforcement actions or other administrative penalties. Public conformity with the guidance document is voluntary only; nonconformity will not affect rights and obligations under existing statutes and regulations.

3. Where Can I Find This Order. You can find this order on the MyFAA employee website at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices and the Dynamic Regulatory System (DRS) at <https://drs.faa.gov>. Operators and the public can find this order on the FAA website at http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices. The order can also be found on the Commercial Space Transportation’s website: [Legislation & Policies, Regulations & Guidance | Federal Aviation Administration](#) and the DRS.

4. Information. Related to implementation of 51 U.S.C. 50924, the FAA recently published a policy statement in the Federal Register, titled “Space Launch and Reentry Licensing and Permitting User Fees,” 91 FR 21591 (April 22, 2026). The statute is highly prescriptive and does not contemplate any rulemakings; accordingly, FAA does not plan to issue an implementing rule.

4. Assessment and Collection of User Fees.

a. Background and Authority. Section 50924 establishes and requires the Secretary of Transportation to collect a fee for each launch or reentry carried out under a license or permit issued pursuant to 51 U.S.C. 50904, during 2026 or a subsequent year. Section 50924 includes two fee schedules, one based on the payload weight and one providing a maximum user fee per launch or reentry. For each launch or reentry carried out under a Chapter 509 license or permit, FAA will determine which fee schedule provides the lowest amount, which in turn will be charged as the user fee. The statutory requirement of payment of user fees, set forth in 51 U.S.C.

50924, will be incorporated in the terms and conditions of licenses and permits issued or modified after the date of this order.

b. Launch or Reentry Carried out. FAA will not assess a user fee until a licensed or permitted launch or reentry has been carried out. Based on the statutory definitions of the terms “launch” and “reentry,”¹ FAA considers a launch to have been carried out when the licensed or permitted operator places the launch or reentry vehicle, including any payload or human being, in a suborbital trajectory, in Earth orbit, or otherwise in outer space. FAA considers a reentry to have been carried out upon the purposeful return of a reentry vehicle, including any payload or human being, from a suborbital trajectory, Earth orbit, or otherwise from outer space to Earth. For the purpose of assessing user fees, FAA does not consider pre-operational events, such as transport to the launch sites, nor scrubs prior to operation as a launch or reentry that has been carried out. Therefore, FAA will not assess a user fee in those circumstances.

c. Weight of Payload. When determining the appropriate user fee for a licensed or permitted launch or reentry, FAA relies on the payload weight that vehicle operators provide to FAA at least 60 calendar days prior to each mission.² The fee is then calculated according to the schedules outlined in 51 U.S.C. 50924(a)(2)–(3).

For the purposes of determining user fees, FAA considers the phrase “weight of the payload” to refer to the total weight in pounds, as measured on Earth’s surface, of any payload (as defined in 51 U.S.C. 50902) that is being launched or reentered under a license or permit issued under Chapter 509. FAA has determined that it is acceptable to measure the payload’s weight at any location on Earth’s surface, irrespective of variations in altitude, latitude, or local geology. While such factors can cause slight differences in the payload’s weight, such variations are negligible for determining the payload’s weight and the corresponding user fees. Therefore, FAA has chosen not to adjust for the minor variations in Earth’s gravitational pull, which can cause slight differences in weight measurements at different locations on the surface of the Earth.

For a licensed or permitted launch or reentry involving multiple payloads, the data required for “weight of the payload” refers to the total combined weight of all payloads being launched or reentered under the same license or permit. For example, if a vehicle operator conducts a licensed or permitted launch that deploys 42 separate payloads, the relevant weight for the purposes of 51 U.S.C. 50924 is the sum of the weights of all 42 payloads. Consequently, for a licensed or permitted launch or reentry involving multiple payloads, the FAA will assess one user fee based on the cumulative weight of all payloads, rather than assessing multiple user fees based on the weight of each individual payload. Vehicle operators must provide the payload weight information to FAA at least 60 calendar days prior to each mission, as required by 14 CFR 450.213(b)(1).³

¹ See 51 U.S.C. 50902(7) and (16), for the definitions of the terms “launch” and “reentry.”

² See, e.g., 14 CFR 450.43(i) and 450.213(b)(1).

³ See, e.g., *id.* Because legacy regulations were still in effect for the beginning of 2026, some launches/reentries covered by section 50924 may have been regulated under the legacy provision. Under 14 CFR 417.17(b)(2) and 415.59(a)(3), which were in effect through March 9, 2026, the operators also were required to provide to FAA the weight of payload at least 60 calendar days prior to each mission.

In the context of a licensed or permitted launch involving a launch vehicle carrying a reentry vehicle, the reentry vehicle is considered part of the payload during launch, as noted in 84 FR 27473, 27474 (Apr. 17, 2024). Therefore, for such a launch, the weight of the reentry vehicle must be included in the payload weight. FAA does not consider human beings, such as government astronauts, crew, or space flight participants, as “payloads.”

For the purposes of calculating the payload weight for a reentry, the weight of the payload is limited to the total weight in pounds, as measured on Earth, of any payload within or attached to the reentry vehicle at the time the licensed or permitted reentry is carried out. This measurement also includes any payload that is jettisoned from the vehicle to purposely survive and land elsewhere on Earth (such as canisters or payloads designed for independent recovery).

d. Fee Collection. In accordance with 51 U.S.C. 50924, FAA assesses user fees on each launch or reentry carried out under a license or permit issued under 51 U.S.C. 50904 during 2026 and subsequent years. Once AST determines that a launch or reentry has been carried out, AFN will update its internal databases and run automation scripts, which will result in the issuance of an invoice to the operator. This invoice will serve as the fee notification and include instructions on how and where to make the payment. The operator must submit payment within 30 calendar days of receiving the invoice, following the instructions provided.

e. Payload Weight Updates. If a launch operator believes the assessed user fee is inaccurate due to a change in payload weight, they can contact AST using the contact information provided in the invoice. This discrepancy may arise from differences between the pre-flight reported payload weight and the actual payload weight. If AST concludes that there is a difference between the pre-flight reported payload weight and the actual payload weight, AST will then re-calculate the user fee based on the updated payload weight and AFN will send out a corrected invoice.

f. Interest and Failure to Pay. Failure to submit payment within 30 calendar days of receiving the invoice will result in the accrual of interest and fees as required by 31 U.S.C. 3717. The interest rate is based on the Current Value of Funds rate, and administrative fees are \$12 per month. If the debt goes to 90 calendar days delinquent, a penalty of 6 percent of principal will begin accruing. FAA may also use discretionary enforcement actions under Chapter 509, including civil penalties, suspension of the license or permit, or revocation of the license or permit, if an operator fails to pay.

Minh A. Nguyen, Ph.D
Deputy Associate Administrator
Office of Commercial Space Transportation

Appendix A. Directive Feedback Information

Please submit any written comments or recommendations for improving this directive or suggest new items or subjects to be added to it. Also, if you find an error, please tell us about it by (1) emailing this form to 9-AST-ASZ210-Directives@faa.gov, or (2) faxing it to (202) 267-5450.

Subject: Order 8800.4, Space Launch and Reentry Licensing and Permitting User Fees

To: Space Policy Division, ASZ-200 at 9-AST-ASZ210-Directives@faa.gov.

(Please mark all appropriate line items)

- An error (procedural or typographical) has been noted in paragraph _____ on page _____.
- Recommend paragraph _____ on page _____ be changed as follows:
(attach separate sheet if necessary)
- In a future change to this order, please include coverage on the following subject:
(briefly describe what you want to be added.)
- Other comments:
- I would like to discuss the above. Please contact me.

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Routing Symbol: _____