

MQ-8B Fire Scout Lost Link Procedure

In the event of a loss of link situation the UAS operator will immediately notify the appropriate ATC facility. If lost link occurs while operating within a restricted area, the UAS will remain within restricted airspace while the UAS pilot attempts to regain command link. If link cannot be re-established the UAS will fly to the heliport on Singing River Island, flying its pre-programmed Lost Link Route with the chase aircraft monitoring traffic. The lost link route to the recovery area is plotted from each waypoint of the mission planned route, so the lost link route will vary depending on where in the mission plan lost link occurs. ATC and chase will be briefed on the mission plan and objectives and will have a printout of the mission plan route and waypoints. This printout will include the exact lost link route from each mission plan waypoint. During lost link, the chase will increase the distance from the UAS to ensure its safety.

If the UAS is operating outside of restricted airspace, the UAS is programmed to return to the Trent Lott International Airport flying its pre-programmed Lost Link Route (the same waypoints as flown outbound from the airport). The chase aircraft will ensure the area is clear of traffic. If command link is restored to the UAS, the pilot will make a decision to either continue the mission, if the cause can be determined and rectified, or recover the aircraft.

The chase aircraft will join with the UAS while in the traffic pattern at Trent Lott International Airport immediately after takeoff and will remain with the UAS until it has landed. The UAS will not be given permission to takeoff unless the chase is in the Trent Lott International Airport's airspace. If there is a problem with the chase that requires it to return to base prior to completion of the UAS flight, the UAS will remain in the restricted area until another chase plane is available and has joined with the UAS.