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## US to Require that Hobbyists Register Drones



Federal officials plan to announce on Monday that all drones will have to be registered with the U.S. Transportation Department, Fortune has learned.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx and F.A.A. Administrator Michael Huerta will hold a press conference in Washington D.C. to explain the government's plans to create a new registration system that all drone buyers will be required to use, according to a source familiar with the situation.

The plan adds hobbyists to those who must register their drones with the government. Previously, only commercial drone users had to register their aircraft with the F.A.A. after getting the authorization to fly.

Drone industry leaders from trade groups and manufacturers will join government officials during the announcement. The plan calls for creating a task force that includes members of the government and the drone industry to create the registry, the source said.

The initiative to create a centralized system for collecting drone registrations has been in the works for the past few weeks. Government officials have been contacting drone makers and industry groups about it over the past few days, the source said.

The drone registration system is supposed to be debut around the Thanksgiving holiday.

The Transportation Department declined to comment on the specifics of the announcement to Fortune, but confirmed that the department will "make an important safety announcement about the use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems" on Monday.

It's unclear what penalties drone owners will face for failing to register their aircraft. Nor is it clear whether all drones must be registered or just ones that are beyond a certain size.

Michael Drobac, the executive director of the Small U.A.V. Coalition, a drone advocacy group whose members include Google, Amazon, and camera maker GoPro, told Fortune that he is concerned with the proposed regulations. Both Amazon and Google are working on drones for delivering products ordered online to customers' doorsteps.

"I have great concerns that the F.A.A. and D.O.T. won't come up with something that will help us move us forward as a country in advancing this technology on their own," Drobac said. "This has to be led by industry."

Source: Fortune

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## US DoT Seeks Public Comments on UAS Registration



In a surprise move, DOT just published a document, *Clarification of the Applicability of Aircraft Registration Requirements for UAS and Request for Information Regarding Electronic Registration for UAS*, to the Federal Register. DOT is soliciting recommendations on all aspects of the UAS registration process, including which UAS should be exempt from the registration requirement.

The clarification and request for information requests that comments be received within 15 days after publication in the Federal Register, which is November 6, although the comment period reportedly will remain open for the near future. Of course, given the Secretary's expedited timeline, comments submitted after November 6 will be less likely to influence the recommendations made by the UAS registration task force. Click [here](#) to access the original document and post a comment.

In addition to clarifying applicable statutory requirements regarding UAS registration, DOT is requesting "information and recommendations regarding what information and registration platform would be appropriate for UAS registration and ways to minimize the burden to the regulated community." DOT is also requesting comments on which UAS, in terms of weight or performance

capabilities, should remain exempt from the registration requirements because of the negligible risk they pose to the national airspace system (NAS).

To facilitate the task force's work in developing UAS registration procedures, DOT is requesting information and data from the public in areas such as:

- At what point should registration occur (e.g. point-of-sale or prior-to-operation)? How should transfers of ownership be addressed in registration?
- Consistent with past practice of discretion, should certain UAS be excluded from registration based on performance capabilities or other characteristics that could be associated with safety risk, such as weight, speed, altitude operating limitations, duration of flight? If so, please submit information or data to help support the suggestions, and whether any other criteria should be considered.
- How should a registration process be designed to minimize burdens and best protect innovation and encourage growth in the UAS industry?
- Should the registration be electronic or web-based? Are there existing tools that could support an electronic registration process?

Whether you are a UAS manufacturer, operator, or user, the comment period offers all industry stakeholders an opportunity to shape UAS regulation and policy.

Source: Hogan Lovells



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Posted in [Regulatory Matters](#) on October 26, 2015 by [The Editor](#). [3 Comments](#)

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## 3 COMMENTS

**Angelo**

October 26, 2015 at 18:35

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## FAA Administrator Opens UAS Registration Task Force Meeting



The Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Registration Task Force completed its first day of work. FAA Administrator Michael Huerta kicked off the Task Force with remarks that outlined the group's objectives and expectations. The FAA briefed participants on the current statutory requirements and international obligations for aircraft registration before the group began initial discussions on a streamlined registration process and minimum requirements for UAS that need to be registered. The Task Force will continue deliberating on Wednesday.

Here are FAA Administrator Michael Huerta's remarks as prepared:

Unmanned aircraft use has increased dramatically in recent years. With this surge in popularity has come growing concerns about their safe operation in our nation's airspace.

In recent months, we've seen an increase in reports of UAS coming too close to manned aircraft and airports. Some have interfered with wildfire fighting in California, and one crashed into a stadium during a U.S. Open tennis match.

These incidents make it clear: we must work harder to ensure a strong culture of safety and responsibility among unmanned aircraft enthusiasts.

There's no single solution for how we do this. The integration of unmanned aircraft is multi-faceted, and our approach must be as nimble as the technology itself.

One tool we're going to use is registration - and that's why we're here today.

Unmanned aircraft have countless potential uses - from package delivery to tasks that are dangerous for people or manned aircraft to perform. No one wants to see this promising technology overshadowed by an incident or accident that could easily be avoided with proper training and awareness of the safety principles that are now second nature in manned aviation.

We invited you to assist us on this task force because each of you brings extensive knowledge about unmanned aircraft, technology, public policy and the aviation industry. You represent a wide range of viewpoints. And you are all united by a common goal: the safe integration of unmanned aircraft.

We're hopeful this task force can provide the FAA guidance on some important questions as to how we determine the best way to register aircraft under 55 pounds:

- How do we make registration as easy as possible for consumers while providing accountability?
- What products should we exclude from registration based on weight, speed, altitude and flying time?
- What information should we collect during the registration process, and what should we do with the data?
- Should every unmanned aircraft sold have its own serial number, or how to tie particular aircraft to a particular user?
- Should the process include a formal education component before an aircraft can be registered?
- Should registration be retroactive and apply to unmanned aircraft that are now in the system?
- Should there be an age requirement for registration?

Ultimately, we want to make registration as easy as possible for consumers, to relieve them of the complexity associated with registering larger, manned aircraft.

Your recommendations will be invaluable as the FAA moves quickly to stand up this new system.

We're working on a tight timetable – Secretary Foxx set a deadline of November 20th for the task force to complete its recommendations. This reflects the urgency of the task at hand.

The holidays are weeks away, and unmanned aircraft are going to be a popular gift item. By some estimates, 700,000 new aircraft could be in the homes of consumers by the end of the year. This means unmanned aircraft could soon far outnumber manned aircraft operating in our nation's airspace.

Many of these new aircraft are bringing new users to aviation – most with little or no experience with aviation regulations.

Registration will give us an opportunity to educate new operators about airspace rules so they can use their unmanned aircraft safely. It will also help us more easily identify and take enforcement action against people who intentionally violate the rules or operate unsafely. A perfect example of this occurred last week, when a drone carrying mobile phones, drugs and hacksaw blades crashed into a prison yard in Oklahoma. Perhaps registration would have helped authorities quickly identify the owner.

We realize that most people want to use their aircraft safely for enjoyment. Registration benefits users and the government alike because it encourages education while providing a mechanism for helping the FAA fulfill its mission of keeping the nation's skies safe.

I recently announced the FAA's new Compliance Philosophy, which uses education and training to ensure we have safe operators.

At the same time, this doesn't mean we're going to go easy on enforcement.

But in cases where we find simple mistakes or a lack of understanding, we'll use tools like training and education to ensure compliance with the regulation and compliance with the standard.

This starts with giving operators the tools and knowledge they need to fly safely. Toward this end, we released the beta version of a new smartphone application called "B4UFLY," which alerts UAS operators to restrictions or requirements in effect at their current or planned flight location.

The FAA and its government and industry partners are also conducting outreach through the Know Before You Fly and No Drone Zone campaigns, most notably during the recent visit by the pope.

But for those who don't follow the rules, we need to continue our enforcement efforts.

Last month, the FAA proposed a \$1.9 million civil penalty against a company that we allege knowingly conducted dozens of unauthorized flights over Chicago and New York. This sends a clear message to others who might pose a safety risk: Operate within the law or we will take action.

As registration, education and enforcement focus on enhancing safety around recreational use, we're also working to put a commercial regulatory framework in place.

Earlier this year, we proposed a rule that would routinely allow small unmanned aircraft operations we know to be safe, and we plan to finalize it by late spring.

Meanwhile, we're approving requests for commercial operations on a case-by-case basis. To date, we've approved more than 2,200 authorizations that allow unmanned aircraft to be used for a wide variety of different purposes.

Under our Pathfinder program, we're working with industry to determine how to safely expand unmanned aircraft operations beyond the parameters of our proposed rule. BNSF Railway recently used an unmanned aircraft to inspect miles of its tracks in New Mexico, demonstrating beyond visual-line of sight capabilities. The flight marked the first of what we hope will be many successful Pathfinder tests and flights.

Integrating unmanned aircraft into our nation's airspace is a big job, and it's one the FAA is determined to get right. We know that we need to work closely with our partners in government and the private sector for this to succeed. This task force is a sign of our commitment to that partnership and we thank you for your work.

Please think big, and think outside the box. Take the interests of all stakeholders, of everyone who will be affected by registration, into consideration, and you need to factor that into your conversations and deliberations. And please - do not worry about achieving perfection. Your ideas will enable us to lay the groundwork for registration, but by no means is it the last word on registration.

You have a lot to accomplish in the next three days. I have no doubt this group will be able to meet the challenge, and I look forward to your recommendations. Given the urgency of this issue,



the DOT and the FAA will move quickly to consider your suggestions as we create a registration system that works for the FAA, consumers, and the safety of our nation's airspace.

Thank you again for dedicating the time to this important undertaking.

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Posted in Regulatory Matters on November 4, 2015 by The Editor. Leave a comment

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## DigitalGlobe Helps Create Drone Air Traffic Control



Data mined from DigitalGlobe's satellite images are at the center of a system that could change how drones operate in the U.S. and globally.

The Low Altitude Traffic and Airspace Safety, or LATAS, uses Verizon's LTE cellular network, Harris' satellite-based surveillance systems and information gleaned from Westminster-based DigitalGlobe's high-resolution Earth imagery to help unmanned aerial vehicles — or UAVs, more commonly called drones — identify and avoid obstacles and safely navigate the airspace.

LATAS, developed by Raleigh, N.C.-based PrecisionHawk, recently completed initial testing and is under review by the Federal Aviation Administration and NASA.

Think of LATAS as air traffic control for flying robots, complete with social media integration — it has real-time tracking, a "geofencing" feature that won't allow drone flight in prohibited airspaces, and even offers live streaming.

"Anybody can fly a drone — maybe not today, but it's trending in that direction — and we need a technological solution to keep them from running into each other, people, bridges, buildings and even into aircraft," Shay Har-Noy, DigitalGlobe's senior director of Geospatial Big Data, said in an interview.

DigitalGlobe has undergone a self-described "strategy shift" in recent months to target new ways to make money from its imagery.

One of these growth areas is the Geospatial Big Data program, or GBD, which is expanding as new applications are discovered. Although Har-Noy could not specify exact numbers, he said this will definitely result in job gains in Colorado.

GBD harnesses the power of DigitalGlobe's fleet of satellites, which capture photos of about 2 million square miles per day. Each image contains topographical and other information that can be used to guide LATAS.

"Instead of just these giant images of the state of Colorado, we can tell them where the trees are, where the water is, where the mountains are," Har-Noy said. "There are all these kinds of very practical concerns you can now solve."

For now, the next step for LATAS is to continue testing until it gains FAA blessing. The team has the ambitious goal to eventually develop and implement the system globally for safe, efficient operation of UAVs.

"We don't have all the answers," Har-Noy said. "We just want to have a path."

DigitalGlobe currently employs 1,256 people — about 1,200 in Colorado — and about 380 contractors across eight locations worldwide. It recently moved into a new 482,000-square-foot Westminster headquarters.

Source: Denver Business Post

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## American International Group Offers Drone Insurance



American International Group, one of the nation's leading property/casualty insurance carriers, is taking on the emerging risk as more and more US retailers – including Amazon and Wal-Mart – seek and are granted FAA approval to operate drones.

In a conference Monday hosted by business software provider Oracle, AIG Chief Technology Officer Mike Brady announced that the insurer has started offering coverage for any damage caused by drones and injuries to drone operators.

“Clearly with that many drones in the airspace you run a risk, so AIG actually now offers drone insurance to our commercial customers,” Brady said.

The policies are offered through AIG's excess and surplus subsidiary Lexington Insurance Company and bear many similarities to auto insurance plans, covering both “broad physical damage” and “third party liability coverage.” However, as they are written especially for drones, the policies also cover drone “operators” and on-ground crew members, as well as electronic malfunctions and component failure.

The coverage excludes problems such as hijacking, unlawful seizure, hacking or “spoofing.”

Drones weighing up to five pounds with a wingspan of up to three feet are covered, though pricing information is not immediately available.

The move to offer drone coverage comes just one month after a *Fortune* magazine report suggested that lack of viable insurance options could threaten the entire industry. And as it is already predicted to generate billions of dollars in economic impact over the next 10 years, it's important that market players come forward soon.

Previously, insurers have cited significantly liability and a lack of regulatory guidelines as making it difficult for underwriters to craft well-rounded products for drone manufacturers and operators.

K insurance house Lloyd's has even gone on record saying risk pricing for drones is extremely difficult in view of their emerging status and inherent issues like third-party liability for physical damage, to say nothing of a lack of meaningful data and risk metrics.

Others in the industry agree.

"Unfortunately, there are big questions and not enough answers," Tom Karol, a general counsel for the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies, told *Fortune*. "There needs to be more clarity on how people will use these, and what will be allowed and won't be allowed is a big issue."

Those monitoring insurer appetites, however, suggest that carriers will not begin to embrace privacy concerns as part of drone liability policies until state and federal legislation becomes clearer on expectations and legality surrounding drones.

"I'm constantly following up with my standard carriers to see if their appetite for drones has changed," said Evan Garmon, a commercial insurance specialist with Harpenau Insurance in Louisville, Kentucky. "Until the regulation and laws in the United States surrounding the small unmanned aircraft systems industry stabilize, many standard insurance companies will stay out of the market.

"Once they do, I plan to be on top of the change to offer better policies for my clients."

Source: Insurance Business America

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TOP STORIES



CNET > Tech Culture > Judge rules man had right to shoot down drone over his house

# Judge rules man had right to shoot down drone over his house

Technically Incorrect: A Kentucky judge dismisses all charges against William Merideth, saying the drone was an invasion of privacy.

by Chris Matyszczyk @ChrisMatyszczyk / October 28, 2015 11:13 AM PDT



*Technically Incorrect offers a slightly twisted take on the tech that's taken over our lives.*



It was a case that gripped the nation. Or at least Kentucky



William Merideth shot down a drone legally, a judge decides.

WDRB-TV screenshot by Chris Matyszczyk/CNET

Should it have temporarily escaped your pressured memory, William Merideth in July said he saw a drone flying above his property in Hillview, Kentucky.

He believed it was spying on his 16-year-old daughter who was sunbathing in the garden. So he took out his shotgun and blasted the drone out of the sky. He was arrested for wanton endangerment and criminal mischief.

Now a Kentucky court has declared Merideth an innocent man. Bullitt County District Court Judge Rebecca Ward on Monday dismissed all charges against Merideth, reported local TV station WDRB-TV.

The drone's owner, David Boggs, had produced flight data that insisted his machine had been flying higher than Merideth had claimed.

The judge, however, seems not a fan of big data. She's a woman of the people. She declared that two human witnesses saw the drone below the tree line. This evidence was, to her, conclusive. To her, this was an invasion of Merideth's privacy.

Amateur drones hovering willy-nilly have disturbed more than just private citizens. Airline pilots' reports of drone close-calls on takeoff and landing have increased exponentially over the past year.



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This summer, amateur drones flew over California wildfires, purely to capture dramatic pictures. This grounded helicopters which were desperately trying to drop water on the flames. There's still a \$75,000 reward for anyone who leads authorities to those responsible.

The FAA's recommendations include not flying above 400 feet. "Don't be careless or reckless with your unmanned aircraft -- you could be fined for endangering people or other aircraft," the agency adds.

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For his part, Merideth believes his case should never have gone to court.

"I don't encourage people to just go out and start blasting stuff for no reason," he told WDRB. "But three times in one day, three times over the course of a year, six times total, over one property? That's not right, that's harassment."

Boggs is reportedly considering his legal options.

Once Amazon and other retailers begin their deliveries by drone, there will surely be an almost permanent buzzing in the sky. How will people know whether the thing that's overhead is spying on them or merely delivering fresh underwear or zucchini to the nice people next door.

Every time technology thinks it's solving a problem, or at least creating new forms of entertainment, it brings with it new annoyances and potential for conflict.

This isn't necessarily a good thing in a nation where so many people own guns.

**Tags:** Technically Incorrect, Tech Culture, Gadgets, Drones

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