

**LAKE TAHOE AIRPORT
Advisory to the Community
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 14, 2015**



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Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)

The gift giving season is upon us. How many of you expect to give or receive a model airplane? A drone? A quadcopter? All of these are considered UAS and flying them is regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Regulation of drones in the hands of civilian pilots took a big step forward today (December 14, 2015). The Federal Aviation Administration announced that all units weighing between 0.55 pounds and 50 pounds must be registered by February 19th, 2016. Anyone caught flying without proper registration after that date could face stiff penalties. The FAA says civil penalties include a fine of up to \$27,500. Criminal penalties include a fine of up to \$250,000 and up to three years in jail.

UAS come in a variety of shapes and sizes and serve diverse purposes. Regardless of size, the responsibility to fly safely applies equally to manned and unmanned aircraft operations.

Currently, small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) may be operated for hobby and recreational purposes under specific safety guidelines as established by Congress. Small UAS flown for recreational purposes are typically known as model aircraft and weigh less than 55 lbs.

The recreational use of sUAS is the operation of an unmanned aircraft for personal interests and enjoyment. For example, using a sUAS to take photographs for your own personal use would be considered recreational; using the same device to take photographs or videos for compensation or sale to another individual would be considered a commercial operation and fall under a separate set of regulations. You should check with the FAA for further determination as to what constitutes commercial or other non-hobby, non-recreational sUAS operations.

Under the Special Rule for Model Aircraft, recreational UAS must be operated in accordance with several requirements, including a community-based set of safety guidelines and within the programming of a nationwide community-based organization such as the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA). Operators not operating within the safety program of a community-based organization should follow the FAA's guidance at [Know Before You Fly](#).

The FAA has partnered with several industry associations to promote [Know Before You Fly](#), a campaign to educate the public about using unmanned aircraft safely and responsibly.

Individuals flying for hobby or recreation are strongly encouraged to follow safety guidelines, which include:

- 1) Follow community-based safety guidelines, as developed by organizations such as the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA).
- 2) Don't fly an aircraft that weighs more than 55 lbs. (these have different regulations).
- 3) Fly no higher than 400 feet and remain below any surrounding obstacles when possible.
- 4) Don't fly within 5 miles of an airport unless you **contact the airport at smiller@cityofslt.us or 530-545-9468** and control tower (airport control tower South Lake Tahoe is non-operational) before flying.
- 5) Keep your sUAS in eyesight at all times.
- 6) Remain well clear of and do not interfere with manned aircraft operations, and you must see and avoid other aircraft and obstacles at all times.
- 7) Don't fly over persons or vehicles, and remain at least 25 feet away from individuals and vulnerable property.
- 8) Contact the airport or control tower before flying within five miles of an airport.
- 9) Don't fly in adverse weather conditions such as in high winds or reduced visibility.
- 10) Don't fly under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 11) Ensure the operating environment is safe and that the operator is competent and proficient in the operation of the sUAS.
- 12) Don't fly near or over sensitive infrastructure or property such as power stations, water treatment facilities, correctional facilities, heavily traveled roadways, government facilities, etc.
- 13) Check and follow all local laws and ordinances before flying over private property.
- 14) Don't conduct surveillance or photograph persons in areas where there is an expectation of privacy without the individual's permission (see AMA's privacy policy).
- 15) Don't fly near people or stadiums.
- 16) Don't be careless or reckless with your unmanned aircraft – you could be fined for endangering people or other aircraft.

Currently the City of South Lake Tahoe is developing a policy that will allow limited UAS operations within 5 miles of the airport. Please sign up at smiller@cityofslt.us with your email address to be an important part of developing this policy.

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Press Release – FAA Announces Small UAS Registration Rule

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For Immediate Release

December 14, 2015

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Registration will be free for the first 30 days

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today announced a streamlined and user-friendly web-based aircraft registration process for owners of small unmanned aircraft (UAS) weighing more than 0.55 pounds (250 grams) and less than 55 pounds (approx. 25 kilograms) including payloads such as on-board cameras.

The Registration Task Force delivered recommendations to FAA Administrator Michael Huerta and Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx on November 21. The rule incorporates many of the task force recommendations.

“Make no mistake: unmanned aircraft enthusiasts are aviators, and with that title comes a great deal of responsibility,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “Registration gives us an opportunity to work with these users to operate their unmanned aircraft safely. I’m excited to welcome these new aviators into the culture of safety and responsibility that defines American innovation.”

Registration is a statutory requirement that applies to all aircraft. Under this rule, any owner of a small UAS who has previously operated an unmanned aircraft exclusively as a model aircraft prior to December 21, 2015, must register no later than February 19, 2016. Owners of any other UAS purchased for use as a model aircraft after December 21, 2015 must register before the first flight outdoors. Owners may use either the paper-based process or

the new streamlined, web-based system. Owners using the new streamlined web-based system must be at least 13 years old to register.

Owners may register through a web-based system at www.faa.gov/uas/registration

Registrants will need to provide their name, home address and e-mail address. Upon completion of the registration process, the web application will generate a Certificate of Aircraft Registration/Proof of Ownership that will include a unique identification number for the UAS owner, which must be marked on the aircraft.

Owners using the model aircraft for hobby or recreation will only have to register once and may use the same identification number for all of their model UAS. The registration is valid for three years.

The normal registration fee is \$5, but in an effort to encourage as many people as possible to register quickly, the FAA is waiving this fee for the first 30 days (from Dec. 21, 2015 to Jan 20, 2016).

“We expect hundreds of thousands of model unmanned aircraft will be purchased this holiday season,” said FAA Administrator Huerta. “Registration gives us the opportunity to educate these new airspace users before they fly so they know the airspace rules and understand they are accountable to the public for flying responsibly.”

The online registration system does not yet support registration of small UAS used for any purpose other than hobby or recreation – for example, using an unmanned aircraft in connection with a business. The FAA is developing enhancements that will allow such online registrations by spring of 2016.

The full rule can be viewed here: www.faa.gov/news/updates/media/20151213_IFR.pdf

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