

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

10/10/03

Cancellation

Date: 10/10/04

SUBJ: INQUIRIES RELATED TO UNMANNED AEROSPACE VEHICLE OPERATIONS

1. PURPOSE. This notice establishes the Flight Standards General Aviation and Commercial Division, Operations and Safety Program Support Branch, AFS-820, as the Flight Standards focal point for coordination of information, procedures, and policy development for Unmanned Aerospace Vehicles (UAV) operations. This notice directs Flight Standards personnel to refer all UAV inquiries to FAA headquarters, AFS-820.

2. DISTRIBUTION. This notice is distributed to the division level in the Flight Standards Service in Washington headquarters, to the branch level in the regional Flight Standards divisions; to the Flight Standards District Offices (FSDO); and to the Regulatory Standards Division at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center. This notice is also distributed electronically to the division level in the Flight Standards Service in Washington headquarters and to all regional Flight Standards divisions and district offices. This information is also available on the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Web site at: [http://www.faa.gov/avr/afs/notices/N 8700-25.htm](http://www.faa.gov/avr/afs/notices/N%208700-25.htm).

3. BACKGROUND. Requests for FAA Certificates of Authorization (COA) to operate UAV-type aircraft are increasing for both civil and military applications. AFS-820, in cooperation with the Air Traffic Service and other FAA organizations, will develop policy and procedures for operation of UAVs in the National Airspace System. To do this, it is important that the scope of the operations, the type of vehicles used, and the applications being considered and developed are understood. Historically, the military use of UAVs has had minimal impact on civil aviation. Authorization to operate these aircraft has been through the issuance of a COA in accordance with Order 7610.4J, Special Military Operations, dated November 3, 1998.

a. COAs have also been issued for civil applications for proof-of-concept testing.

b. Air Traffic Service has issued these COAs in coordination with Flight Standards Service.

c. UAV technological advances increase the potential use of such aircraft. Environmental research, crop monitoring, and security applications are being considered for UAV applications. To ensure a full understanding of the proposed uses of these vehicles and to ensure a consistent application of the policies developed for UAV application, this notice directs that all inquiries received by Flight Standards personnel concerning UAV operations be referred to AFS 820. In addition, Flight Standards personnel, when contacted by someone from the Air Traffic Service or other FAA organization asking for concurrence with the requirements outlined in a draft COA for a proposed UAV operation, shall refer the request to AFS-820.

d. The phrase "Unmanned Aerospace Vehicle (UAV)" is a universally recognized term that encompasses a vast spectrum of aircraft that are autonomous, semiautonomous, or remotely operated. Many other terms are used interchangeably, some intended to be synonymous with UAV, while others apply a separate meaning. For example, the term, Remote Operated Aircraft, has been used synonymously with UAV. It also has been used to identify several high-altitude, long range UAV-type aircraft. AFS-820's intent is to document all use of, and develop policy for, all UAV-type aircraft, regardless of the marketing or design phraseology used. Therefore, all inquiries using UAV-type phraseology are to be forwarded to AFS-820. Examples include: Unoccupied Aerospace Vehicle, Remote Controlled Vehicle, Remote Piloted Vehicle, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, Radio Controlled aircraft, etc.

NOTE: This notice does not apply to the recreational, noncommercial use of model aircraft. It is not intended to inhibit or restrict the routine operation of model aircraft for recreational purposes. (The Academy of Model Aeronautics, in part, defines model aircraft as weighing less than 55 pounds and being

operated below 400 feet above ground level.) Additional guidance for the operation of these aircraft is provided in Advisory Circular AC 91-57, Model Aircraft Operating Standards, dated June 9, 1981.

4. DISPOSITION. Guidance for inspectors issuing, reissuing, and surveying UAV operations will be incorporated into Order 8700.1, General Aviation Operations Inspector's Handbook. This notice was developed by the Operations and Safety Program Support Branch, AFS-820. Direct any questions regarding this notice or UAVs to AFS-820 by telephone, 202-267-3370, or FAX, 202-267-5094.

/s/

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