Unmanned Aircraft Systems

The FAA has issued its authorization of UC’s systemwide Section 333 exemption request. This authorization will allow UC users of FAA-registered Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) to operate the specified aircraft within the operating parameters described in the FAA’s letter. The FAA’s letter authorizing UC use may be accessed here: https://www.faa.gov/uas/legislative_programs/section_333/333_authorizations/media/Regents-University-of-California-15087.pdf

SYSTEMWIDE SUPPORT FOR USERS OF UC-OWNED sUAS
UCOP’s Risk Services Division has created and funded the Center of Excellence on Unmanned Aircraft System Safety. We will have a website up shortly that will provide information about the requirements for use and operation of UC-owned UAS’s. We will send out a separate notice about the url for that site as soon as it is up and running. We are very pleased to introduce Brandon Stark, Lab Manager for the Mechatronics, Embedded Systems and Automation Lab in the School of Engineering at UC Merced, who will be leading the formation of the UC Center of Excellence on Unmanned Aircraft System Safety. Brandon has agreed to serve as the systemwide advisor with regard to drone use under the Section 333 authorization.

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, AND IN ORDER TO ENSURE FAA-COMPLIANCE ALL UC FACULTY AND STAFF WHO WISH TO OPERATE AIRCRAFT UNDER UC’S SYSTEMWIDE SECTION 333 EXEMPTION MUST FIRST CONTACT UC CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM SAFETY BRANDON STARK AT bstark2@ucmerced.edu. Brandon will facilitate the FAA-required tracking of all educational and research flights and operations of UC-owned UAS, pursuant to item 24 of the exemption and the UC flight manual.

FAQS REGARDING UC’S SEC 333 AUTHORIZATION:

1. FAA authorization is required from all non-hobbyist use of drones, which means that all operation of UC drones must be done either under and in accordance with the requirements of this section 333 grant of exemption or under a separately issued COA.

2. All UC-owned aircraft must be registered with a tail number under the name of the Regents of the University of California before they are flown. The list of currently registered aircraft can be found here: http://tinyurl.com/gva2coe

3. Any operator of a UC-owned UAS must have an airline transport, commercial, private, recreational or sport pilot certificate.

4. UC-owned UAS flights must be at least 500 ft away from any persons, vessels, vehicles or structures.

5. UC-owned UAS flights above 200 ft will require a separate approval from the FAA.
6. UC-owned UAS flights must be at least 5 NM away from any towered airport. Operations within 5 NM will require a separate approval from the FAA.

7. Only certain models of commercially available UAS’s have been approved by the FAA. No other aircraft may be used with this Sec 333 exemption. It is important to note that the FAA determines which drones are suitable for use under the Sec 333 exemption, and it is not the UC system that decides. The list of FAA-approved models is as follows:

- DJI Phantom 1, DJI Phantom 2, DJI Phantom 2 Vision, DJI Phantom 2 Vision+, DJI Phantom 3, DJI F550 FlameWheel, DJI Inspire 1, DJI Spreading Wing series, 3D Robotics Iris, 3D Robotics Iris+, 3D Robotics X8, 3D Robotics X8+, 3D Robotics Solo, 3D Robotics Aero-M, PrecisionHawk Hawkeye Mk-III, Draganflyer X4-ES, Draganflyer X4-P, Draganflyer X6, Draganflyer Guardian, CyberQuad Maxi and the Pulse Aerospace VAPOR 55

- NOTE: The FAA rejected a number of requested aircraft proposed in UC’s application. Some notable rejections: DJI Matrice 100, 3D Robotics Quads, A.R. Parrot Drone. All of the fixed-wing platforms were rejected with the exception of 3D Robotics Aero-M.

Thank you in advance for helping to UC implement safe UAS operations that are compliant with FAA regulations.

Contact

Risk Management Services
rms@ucdavis.edu

More information
/risk-management-services-staff-listing [4]