

FAA Memo Regarding New Recreational Drone Laws

Memorandum

Date: May 10 2019

To: Distribution

From: Aaron Barnett, Director, Operations-Headquarters, AJT-2

Subject: Mandatory Briefing Item: Pre-Duty Brief – Operational Personnel Sec 349 sUAS Implementation, due May 16, 2019

Due to changes in the law mandated by the 2018 FAA Reauthorization Act, all hobbyist or recreational Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) operators are required to have authorization from Air Traffic to fly in controlled airspace. This new law puts restrictions in place that limit all recreational operations to less than 400 feet in uncontrolled airspace and requires approval for any operation in controlled airspace. This memo and attached pre-duty brief serves as interim guidance for the implementation of this new law.

Previously, recreational flyers could communicate with the lower or controlling facility and notify of "intent to fly." The language in the previous law was vague and did not allow for or require, an intervention or approval from air traffic controllers. This new law will remove local air traffic controller involvement with recreational UAS operators and reduce distractions and phone calls while improving the safety of the National Airspace System (NAS).

Air Traffic Facilities should not authorize or approve any recreational flight. The purpose of this implementation plan is to diminish the need for calls to the towers from any recreational operator requesting to fly in controlled airspace. The authorization and restrictions for recreational UAS operators will be a National Authorization for fixed sites in controlled airspace as detailed below:

1. Recreational UAS operators will be authorized to fly in controlled airspace at fixed sites that will be listed via multiple venues from Federal Register Notice (FRN), Advisory Circular (AC) and FAA Office of Communications (AOC) public releases.
2. Approximately 350 Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) fixed sites are located in controlled airspace, but less than 200 are listed for recreational UAS use.
3. These sites will be more than 2 miles from a runway surface and be required to operate in accordance with altitudes specified in Unmanned Aircraft Systems Facility Map's (UASFM).
4. The authorizations will be in the form of a National Authorization with national restrictions that have been approved by Law, DOT and FAA HQ. Therefore, air traffic controller personnel or support staff should not make any phone calls or authorizations,

This is a significant change in how we have previously conducted business. Please be understanding when recreational UAS operators call; use the language in the attached pre-duty brief and refer them to www.faa.gov/uas for guidance on how and where to operate.

NOTE: In the summer, [Low Altitude Authorization Notification Capability \(LAANC\)](#) will accept and authorize recreational requests in UASFM values, but will not accept or authorize anything for altitudes higher than 400 feet or outside the UASFM.

Refer all Recreational Flyer or general inquiries to www.faa.gov/uas.

Action/Deadline:

Air Traffic Managers must ensure all operational personnel are briefed on the attached PowerPoint no later than May 16 as this briefing is a pre-duty requirement.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Henry Rigol, at henry.rigol@faa.gov or (202) 267-8185, or William Stanton at william.b.stanton@faa.gov or (202) 267-4564, Air Traffic Services, Operational Integration, AJT-3.