

FAA Announces UAS Advisory Committee, Releases Memorandum on Educational Use of UAS

May 4, 2016

Speaking today at the AUVSI XPONENTIAL conference in New Orleans, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Michael Huerta announced the establishment of an unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) advisory committee to advise the FAA on key issues related to the integration of UAS into the National Airspace System (NAS). Interested parties must apply for membership by May 19, 2016. In addition, Administrator Huerta announced the release of a memorandum clarifying that certain education-related UAS operations do not require Section 333 exemptions. Administrator Huerta also stated in his remarks that the FAA intends to issue final rules in its small UAS rulemaking proceeding by “late Spring,” and that the adopted rules will eliminate the need for most Section 333 exemptions.

UAS Advisory Committee

The advisory committee will be led by Intel CEO Brian Krzanich and FAA Deputy Administrator Michael Whitaker. The FAA’s website provides that committee members will “work in partnership with the FAA to identify and propose actions to the FAA on how best to facilitate resolution of issues affecting the efficiency and safety of integrating UAS into the NAS.” Administrator Huerta stated in his remarks that the agency anticipates it to be a “long lasting” group.

The FAA intends the committee to represent a wide range of stakeholder views including industry, government, academia, retail, and technology. The FAA will make membership decisions with assistance from the Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics

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Practice Areas

Telecom, Media & Technology
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(RTCA). Those interested in joining the committee must submit a Registration of Interest form through RTCA's website by May 19, 2016. RTCA and the FAA expect to conclude membership selection by May 31, 2016.

In his remarks, Administrator Huerta analogized the committee to the NextGen Advisory Committee (NAC), which the FAA convened with assistance from RTCA to advise on issues facing the aviation community related to the implementation of the FAA's NextGen aviation system. Administrator Huerta stated that the number of members for the UAS advisory committee has not been finalized. The NAC has 30 members and oversees much larger working groups.

The UAS advisory committee does not yet have an official name. The FAA's website refers to it as the "Drone Advisory Council" or the "UAS Advisory Committee" and the RTCA site calls it the "Drone Advisory Committee."

Educational Use of UAS

In a memorandum dated today, the FAA clarified that in some circumstances, students and others connected to educational institutions do not need to obtain authorization using the exemption process applicable to commercial operators pursuant to Section 333 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (FMRA). Instead, individuals can operate without an exemption pursuant to Section 336 of the FMRA (governing hobbyist use of UAS) in the following circumstances:

- UAS operation for hobby or recreational purposes at educational institutions and community-sponsored events, provided there is no compensation for the operation;
- UAS operation by students in furtherance of aviation-related education at an accredited educational institution; and
- Assistance of such students by faculty members, provided the student maintains operational control of the UAS and the faculty member's control is incidental and secondary.

To view the FAA's press release on today's announcements, please [click here](#).