

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **60.08 Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)**  | **Revised: April 25, 2023** |

1. GOVERNING REGULATIONS

These procedures are governed by The Texas A&M University System (System) Regulation, [*24.01.07 Unmanned Aircraft Systems*](http://policies.tamus.edu/24-01-07.pdf)*,* the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and relevant state law.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to supplement System Regulation 24.01.07 and to establish processes required to ensure Texas A&M Forest Service compliance with governing regulations and reduce the risks to safety, security and privacy. This procedure applies to agency employees, contractors, vendors, visitors and students operating UAS on any agency owned/managed property, as well as, employees, contractors or vendors operating UAS on property not owned/managed by the agency as part of their employment or contract scope.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 COA – Certificate of Waiver or Authorization. The COA is an authorization issued by the Air Traffic Organization to a public operator for a specific UAS activity. The COA is issued in the name of the agency and not in an individual’s name.

3.2 Model Aircraft – Model aircraft are considered differently by the FAA than other UAS and have different regulations. Model aircraft are not for business purposes, only for hobby and recreation. Model aircraft must be kept within visual sightline of the operator and should weigh under 55 pounds unless certified by an aeromodelling community-based organization. Model aircraft must be flown a sufficient distance from populated areas.

3.3 Operator – The pilot who is controlling, maneuvering or commanding the UAS.

3.4 Pilot In Command (PIC) – An individual with a pilot’s certification who is responsible for flight operations. May work in conjunction with a Visual Observer.

3.5 Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) – UAS are also known as or may be characterized as drones. According to the FAA, a UAS is the unmanned aircraft and all of the associated support equipment, control station, data links, telemetry, communications and navigation equipment, etc., necessary to operate the unmanned aircraft. UAS may have a variety of names including quadcopter, quadrotor, etc. FAA regulation applies to UAS regardless of size or weight. Model aircraft are not considered by the FAA as UAS and have different regulations.

3.6 UAS Supervising Authority – A designated committee created by the Director to oversee safe and compliant UAS and model aircraft activity.

4. UAS SUPERVISING AUTHORITY

4.1 Through the issuance of these procedures the Director creates and establishes the UAS Supervising Authority.

4.2 Members of the UAS Supervising Authority are appointed and removed by the Director. All appointments and removals will be formally documented in writing.

4.3 All members of the UAS Supervising Authority must meet the minimum qualifications set forth by System Risk Management or be appointed and obtain training to meet those minimum qualifications.

4.4 The UAS Supervising Authority is responsible for agency compliance with all requirements contained within the governing System Regulation 24.01.07, applicable FAA regulations and applicable state statutes. The UAS Supervising Authority is also responsible for overseeing the safe and compliant UAS activity being performed:

 (a) on agency property

 (b) by agency employees, regardless of location

 (c) by agency contractors that conduct UAS operations in performance of contract

4.5 The UAS Supervising Authority is the account holder for any blanket COAs for employee operated flights and must process all applications on a case-by-case basis. Contractors are responsible for obtaining COAs with approval from the UAS Supervising Authority.

 4.6 The following must be approved, authorized and/or managed by the UAS Supervising Authority:

1. all UAS flights operating under FAA Part 107 on agency property, property under the responsibility of the agency or by employees or contractors conducting UAS operations away from property under agency responsibility.

 (b) agency pilots or remote PICs.

 (c) the purchase of UASs and pilot licenses from agency accounts.

 (d) all UAS flights by hired/contracted vendors.

4.7 Model aircraft flights on agency owned/managed property are not allowed.

4.8 Coordinate with the Associate Director for Finance and Administration to evaluate operational risk and make a determination on whether insurance should be procured for UAS operations.

4.9 Ensure that all purchased UAS are placed on inventory and have an asset number assigned to it, regardless of dollar amount.

4.10 Ensure that all UAS purchased are classified as EAR99; classification must be verified prior to purchase. Exceptions must be coordinated with the Compliance Coordinator for export controls.

5. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

 5.1 Contractors hired by the agency to conduct UAS operations:

 (a) must follow FAA Part 107 guidelines.

 (b) must submit an agency [UAS Flight Authorization Application](http://tfsfinance.tamu.edu/modules/finance/admin/procedures/Unmanned%20Aircraft%20Systems%20%28UAS%29%20Flight%20Authorization%20Application.pdf) to the UAS Supervising Authority prior to flight.

 (c) are not allowed to use a third-party vendor or subcontractor to conduct UAS operations

 5.2 Personal UASs will not be used by the agency.

 5.3 Pilots must follow FAA Part 107 and UAS Standard Operating Procedures.

 5.4 An agency Flight Authorization form must be completed (prior to flight) for requests to fly and submitted to the UAS Supervising Authority for coordination and approvals.

 5.5 UAS operators must take all reasonable measures to avoid violations of areas normally considered private and follow Texas law when operating a UAS for the purposes of recording or transmitting visual images.

 5.6 Any visual images recorded by the agency using a UAS is the sole property of the agency. Employees and members of the public are allowed to link their social media to UAS images that are posted to the agency Facebook page; however, they are not authorized to post copies of agency videos directly to their social media.

5.7 Flight and Maintenance Records of UAS

 5.7.1 The UAS pilot in command (PIC) must maintain all flight and maintenance records for the piloted UAS according to FAA rules and regulations.

 5.7.2 The UAS supervising authority shall maintain copies of flight and/or maintenance records or additional information concerning a UAS as required by FAA rule, FAA regulation, contract, grant or award. Copies shall be kept for the period specified by the FAA rule, FAA regulation, contract, grant or award.

 5.8 The agency Compliance Coordinator will perform an annual compliance review of documents associated with the approval process managed by the UAS Supervising Authority. Results of this review will be reviewed by the UAS Supervising Authority.

CONTACT: UAS Supervising Authority, (979) 458-7345