

An unmanned aircraft system (UAS), sometimes called a drone, is an aircraft without a human pilot onboard – instead, the UAS is controlled from an operator on the ground.

When you fly a drone in the United States, it is your responsibility to understand and abide by the rules.

There are two ways for recreational or hobby UAS (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) fliers to operate in the National Airspace System in accordance with the law and/or FAA regulations. Each of the two options has specific requirements that the UAS operator must follow. The decision as to which option to follow is up to the individual operator.

Option #1. Fly in accordance with the Special Rule for Model Aircraft (Public Law 112-95 Section 336). Under this rule, operators must:

- a. [Register](#) their UAS with the FAA
- b. Fly for hobby or recreational purposes only
- c. Follow a community-based set of safety guidelines
- d. Fly the UAS within visual line-of-sight
- e. Give way to manned aircraft
- f. Provide prior notification to the airport and air traffic control tower, if one is present, when flying within 5 miles of an airport
- g. Fly UAS that weigh no more than 55 lbs. unless certified by a community-based organization

FAA Regulations

- [Register your drone](#) with the FAA at <https://faadronezone.faa.gov/#/>

Federal law requires that small unmanned aircraft weighing more than .55 pounds and less than 55, be registered with the FAA and marked with a registration number

- Fly your drone at or below 400 feet
- Keep your drone within your line of sight
- Respect privacy
- Never fly near other aircraft, especially near airports
- Never fly over groups of people, public events, or stadiums full of people
- Never fly near emergencies such as fires or hurricane recovery efforts
- Never fly under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Be aware of [FAA Airspace Restrictions](#)

Airspace Restrictions

There are many types of airspace restrictions in the United States. Below is a list of restrictions that commonly affect UAS flights, including:

- [Security Sensitive Airspace Restrictions](#)

Security Sensitive Airspace Restrictions

The FAA, under 14 CFR § 99.7 — Special Security Instructions (SSI), has prohibited all UAS flights within the airspace defined under UAS NOTAM FDC 7/7282. The restrictions extend from the ground up to 400 feet AGL, apply to all types and purposes of UASflight operations, and remain in effect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- [Temporary Flight Restrictions](#)

Temporary Flight Restrictions

Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) define a certain area of airspace where air travel is limited because of a temporary hazardous condition, such as a wildfire or chemical spill; a security-related event, such as the United Nations General Assembly; or other special situations. The text of the actual TFR contains the details about the restriction, including the size, altitude, time period that it is in effect, and what types of operations are restricted and permitted.

- [Restricted or Special Use Airspace](#)

Restricted or Special Use Airspace

The airspace surrounding Washington DC is the most restricted in the country. Flying your drone is illegal in any of the restricted airspace above the Nation's capital. For more information, read about [No Drone Zone](#).

Special use airspace is used to designate airspace in which certain activities must be confined, or where limitations may be imposed on aircraft operations that are not part of those activities. Types of Special Use Airspace include:

- Prohibited areas
- Restricted areas
- Warning areas
- Military operation areas (MOAs)
- Alert areas
- Controlled firing areas (CFAs)

- [Stadiums and Sporting Events](#)

Flying UAS in and around stadiums is prohibited starting one hour before and ending one hour after the scheduled time of any of the following events:

Major League Baseball

National Football League

NCAA Division One Football

NASCAR Sprint Cup, Indy Car, and Champ Series races

Specifically, UAS operations are prohibited within a radius of three nautical miles of the stadium or venue.

- [Wildfires](#)

It is illegal to fly your UAS in or around a wildfire firefighting operation.

- [Airports](#)

Airports

Recreational operators are required to give notice for flights within five miles of an airport to **both** the airport operator and air traffic control tower, if the airport has a tower. However, recreational operations are not permitted in Class B airspace around most major airports without specific air traffic permission and coordination.

Option #2. Fly under the FAA's Small UAS Rule (14 CFR part 107). Under this rule, operators must:

- a. [Register](#) their UAS with the FAA as a "non-modeler"
- b. [Obtain an FAA Remote Pilot Certificate](#)
- c. Follow the [operational requirements](#) (PDF) of Part 107

