



## About Know Before You Fly

“Know Before You Fly” is an educational campaign that provides prospective unmanned aircraft users with the information and guidance they need to fly safely and responsibly.

## About AUVSI

The Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI)—the world’s largest nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of unmanned systems and robotics—represents more than 7,500 members from 60+ allied countries involved in the fields of government, industry and academia. AUVSI members work in the defense, civil and commercial markets.



For more information, go to [www.auvsi.org](http://www.auvsi.org).

## About AMA

The Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) is the premier community-based organization in the United States for model aviation enthusiasts. With 175,000 members, the AMA is dedicated to the advancement and safeguarding of modeling activities. The Academy provides leadership, organization, competition, protection, representation, education and scientific/technical development to the model aviation community.



For more information, go to [www.modelaircraft.org](http://www.modelaircraft.org).

## About the FAA

The Federal Aviation Administration is committed to providing the safest, most efficient aerospace system in the world. The agency is executing a plan for safe and staged integration of unmanned aircraft systems into the National Airspace System.



For more information, go to [www.faa.gov/UAS](http://www.faa.gov/UAS).

For more information visit

[WWW.KNOWBEFOREYOUFLY.ORG](http://WWW.KNOWBEFOREYOUFLY.ORG)

Founding Members



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## Commercial

The FAA currently authorizes the use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) for commercial or business purposes on a case-by-case basis. You may not fly your UAS for commercial purpose without the express permission from the FAA. You should check with the FAA for further determination as to what constitutes a commercial or business use of small UAS.

### What is a commercial use of UAS?

Any commercial use in connection with a business, including:

- Selling photos or videos taken from a UAS
- Using UAS to provide contract services, such as industrial equipment or factory inspection
- Using UAS to provide professional services, such as security or telecommunications

### What are some examples of commercial uses of UAS?

- Professional real estate or wedding photography
- Professional cinema photography for a film or television production
- Providing contract services for mapping or land surveys

If you want to use UAS for a commercial purpose, you have a few options. You can apply for an exemption from the FAA to operate commercially. You can use UAS with an FAA airworthiness certificate and operate pursuant to FAA rules. In both cases you would also need an FAA Certificate of Authorization (COA). For more information about how to apply for an exemption, visit [https://www.faa.gov/uas/legislative\\_programs/section\\_333/](https://www.faa.gov/uas/legislative_programs/section_333/).

## Recreational

Currently, small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) may be operated for hobby and recreational purposes under specific safety guidelines as established by Congress. Small UAS flown for recreational purposes are typically known as model aircraft.

Under the Special Rule for Model Aircraft, recreational UAS must be operated in accordance with several requirements, including a community-based set of safety guidelines and within the programming of a nationwide community-based organization such as the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA). Operators not operating within the safety program of a community-based organization should follow the FAA's guidance at [http://www.faa.gov/uas/publications/model\\_aircraft\\_operators/](http://www.faa.gov/uas/publications/model_aircraft_operators/).

### What is recreational use of a sUAS?

The recreational use of sUAS is the operation of an unmanned aircraft for personal interests and enjoyment. For example, using an sUAS to take photographs for your own personal use would be considered recreational; using the same device to take photographs or videos for compensation or sale to another individual would be considered a commercial operation. You should check with the FAA for further determination as to what constitutes commercial or other non-hobby, non-recreational sUAS operations.

### What are the safety guidelines for sUAS recreational users?

- Follow community-based safety guidelines, as developed by organizations such as the Academy of Model Aeronautics.
- Fly no higher than 400 feet and remain below any surrounding obstacles when possible.
- Keep your sUAS in eyesight at all times, and use an observer to assist if needed.

- Remain well clear of and do not interfere with manned aircraft operations, and you must see and avoid other aircraft and obstacles at all times.
- Do not intentionally fly over unprotected persons or moving vehicles, and remain at least 25 feet away from individuals and vulnerable property.
- Contact the airport or control tower before flying within five miles of an airport.
- Do not fly in adverse weather conditions such as in high winds or reduced visibility.
- Do not fly under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Ensure the operating environment is safe and that the operator is competent and proficient in the operation of the sUAS.
- Do not fly near or over sensitive infrastructure or property such as power stations, water treatment facilities, correctional facilities, heavily traveled roadways, government facilities, etc.
- Check and follow all local laws and ordinances before flying over private property.
- Do not conduct surveillance or photograph persons in areas where there is an expectation of privacy without the individual's permission (see AMA's privacy policy).

If you want to use a model aircraft for recreational purpose, we encourage you to read the AMA's Model Aircraft Safety Code and Community-Based Guidelines.

## Public Entities

Public entities, which include publically funded universities, law enforcement, fire departments and other government agencies, may currently apply for a COA from the FAA in order to use sUAS in public aircraft operations.

### Who can obtain a COA to operate public aircraft?

- Only government entities—such as federal and state government agencies, law enforcement agencies and public colleges and universities—can receive a COA for public UAS aircraft operations.
- Public aircraft operations must be conducted for a governmental function.
- COAs are most commonly issued to public (government) entities, but are also required for civil (private) operations.
- The FAA thoroughly evaluates each COA application to determine the safety of the proposal.
- COAs are issued for a specific period of time, usually two years, and include special provisions unique to each proposal, such as a defined block of airspace and time of day sUAS can be used.

### How can I apply for a COA?

- Visit the FAA website for information on how to apply for a COA online
- Since 2009, the FAA has taken steps to streamline the application process by transitioning online
- The average authorization period is less than 60 days
- Expedited authorization is available in emergency and life-threatening situations

*\* For more information about public aircraft operations refer to 49 U.S.C. §§ 40102(a)(41), 40125, and FAA Advisory Circular 00-1.1A, Public Aircraft Operations (Feb. 12, 2014).*