

## Procedures related to the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) policy

### **LINK to posted policy**

To submit a drone operating plan approved by a sponsoring USC school or division to the UAS Review Board for registration, the operator must submit the plan to the Board no less than 10 days prior to each proposed use (as per steps outlined below).

To submit a drone operating plan to the USC UAS Review Board for a one-time exception to the university's drone policy, the operator must submit an application no less than 30 days prior to each proposed use (as per steps outlined below).

An operator who has obtained an FAA exemption that allows for UAS flight in areas designated by a valid and current Certificate of Authorization or Waiver (COA) per FAA guidelines, or who can demonstrate exemption from these requirements, must still obtain operational approval from the UAS Review Board (unless operating plan has already been approved at the dean or vice president level, as per the **USC UAS policy**).

At all times, an approved operator of a properly authorized UAS must comply with FAA regulations, federal law, state law, and any local or other applicable laws or regulations regarding unmanned aircraft systems, in addition to compliance with the university UAS policy and any additional conditions required by the UAS Review Board. Evidence of compliance with such laws and regulations is a prerequisite to the operation of a UAS on or above USC property or in connection with a USC sanctioned or affiliated event or activity.

UAS Review Board approval does not override any other approval required by the university or other governing body.

Note that applications for commercial UAS use will not be accepted. The UAS Review Board will rely on the current FAA definition of commercial UAS use to help make this determination. Commercial users should obtain approval from a sponsoring USC school dean or division vice president, and resubmit the approved operating plan for registration.

### **Registration procedure for operating plans approved by a sponsoring USC school or division**

**Step 1:** Submit the approved drone operating plan to the UAS Review Board at [drone@admin.usc.edu](mailto:drone@admin.usc.edu) at least 10 days prior to the operation date disclosed in the approved operating plan. The operating plan must include contact information of the executive that approved the operating plan.

**Step 2:** The UAS Review Board will confirm the details of the approved operating plan with the executive who granted approval.

**Step 3:** The UAS Review Board will issue an acknowledgement that the approved operating plan has been reviewed and registered by the UAS Review Board. Registration details will be emailed to both the drone operator and the sponsoring executive. Drone operators will be

expected to provide valid registration information to campus safety personnel while piloting a UAS on or above USC property or in connection with a USC sanctioned or affiliated event or activity.

### **One-time policy exception application procedure**

**Step 1:** Submit a **fully completed application** along with the operating plan (see below for required operating plan details) to the UAS Review Board at [drone@admin.usc.edu](mailto:drone@admin.usc.edu) at least 30 days prior to each planned operation of a UAS system. The UAS Review Board will consider a multi-event exemption application if the proposed operation occurs on consecutive days.

**Step 2:** The UAS Review Board will issue an acknowledgement that the application is under review. The acknowledgment will note any omissions or deficiencies in the application, and may include suggested modifications to the application. The applicant will have the opportunity to address UAS Review Board comments prior to a final determination.

**Step 3:** The UAS Review Board will issue a final determination. If permission is not granted, the applicant cannot operate a UAS on university property or at any university-sanctioned event or activity. If granted, the Board will send permission to the applicant's email address. The applicant must provide a copy of this permission to the UAS pilot and operating team, who in turn must be able to produce the permission if asked by university personnel during the operation of the UAS.

### **Prerequisites for any UAS operating plan:**

- a. Proof that the applicant is either as an active student, faculty member, or employee of the university or its affiliates.
- b. The envisioned UAS operation must demonstrate compliance with all FAA regulations, applicable laws, government regulations, and university policy.
- c. The envisioned operation must be judged by the UAS Review Board to not pose an unacceptable threat to health, safety, privacy, or the environment, either in an absolute sense or compared to other methods of obtaining the desired information.
- d. The envisioned operation must be judged by the UAS Review Board to be in the best interest of the public and the university.

### **The UAS Operating Plan must include:**

- a. Proposed purpose(s) of the operation.
- b. Proposed use and handling of any data (visual, auditory, multi-spectral, etc.) collected during the flights.

- c. Hardware and software to be used, including technical specifications from the manufacturer(s) of the UAS airframe and sensors.
- d. Total weight and maximum speed of the UAS and any ancillary equipment affixed to the aircraft, per technical specifications from the manufacturer(s).
- e. Dates and times of the UAS operation.
- f. Operating area, including a description of the resident or temporary populations therein and the proposed notification of those populations prior to flight.
- g. Boundary map of operating area and proposed method for staying within those boundaries
- h. The identity and contact information of pilot(s) or other remote operator(s), as well as proof of certification and records pertaining to flight training
- i. The identity and contact information of the primary USC sponsor(s).
- j. Examples of data or imagery to be collected, or a video documenting the UAS maneuver(s) to be performed.
- k. Evidence of approval of any required licenses or permissions or explanation and supporting documentation for any exemption from such requirement.
- l. Proposed UAS emergency landing procedures and an emergency response plan with specific lost link procedures.
- m. Provisions for the safety and security of persons and property within the operating area.
- n. Proof of insurance from the pilot(s) or other remote operator(s)

Deliberations of the USC UAS Review Board may be informed by, but do not supplant or supersede, other related university policies and review procedures.

### **Definitions – as of December 2015**

USC Property – Buildings, facilities, grounds, and land that are owned or controlled by University of Southern California.

COA - Certificate of Authorization or Waiver. According to the FAA, the COA is an authorization issued by the FAA to an operator for a specific UAS activity. After a complete application is submitted, FAA conducts a comprehensive operational and technical review. If necessary, provisions or limitations may be imposed as part of the approval to ensure the UAS

can operate safely with other airspace users. In most cases, FAA will provide a formal response within 60 days from the time a completed application is submitted.

333 Exemption – FAA exemption based on Section 333 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (FMRA) which grants the Secretary of Transportation the authority to provide relief from certain airworthiness requirements within 14 CFR 91 and to determine whether an airworthiness certificate is required for a UAS to operate safely in the National Airspace System.

UAS - Unmanned Aerial System - UASs are also known as or may be characterized as unmanned aerial systems, model aircraft, or 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. Unmanned aerial systems may have a variety of names including drones, quadcopter, quadrotor, etc.

Model Aircraft Operations - Model aircraft operations are UASs flown for hobby or recreational purposes below 400 feet and are flown in accordance with a community-based set of safety guidelines and within the programming of a nationwide community-based organization. Model aircraft operation must be kept within visual sightline of the operator, not flown over people, and should weigh under 55 pounds.