



## New FAA rules just the beginning for drone regulation

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The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently established a commercial drone usage milestone – both for businesses and the federal government. In what has been characterized as “more than two years of debate” and “industry turmoil” regarding drone regulations and enforcement, the FAA has developed regulations for small commercial drones, which implements a pilot licensing process and establishes a ban on nighttime drone flight. The regulations act as a sequel to the FAA’s December 2015 launch of a mandatory drone registration process and attempts to address at least some of the security issues that unmanned aerial devices produce.

While the governments’ official allowance of commercial drone use gives relief to many businesses across the country, this significant development does come with an important set of guidelines attached. Most importantly, drone operators, considered “pilots,” will now be required to have a remote pilot license and a background check from the Transportation Security Administration. But despite these new requirements, the new process breaks down significant barriers, especially for small businesses. Before these regulations were put in place, commercial drone operators were required to have a pilot license and an FAA exemption to fly, which was a long and costly process.

These FAA regulations, however, do not put an end to all country-wide drone issues. While they address some security concerns and attempt to organize a scattered and difficult-to-monitor practice, many issues are left untouched. Privacy concerns, for example, are likely to continue to be debated. Higher-flying drones also lack straightforward regulation.

Recently, Terry Biggio, a senior FAA air-traffic-control official, said that integrating drones into the national airspace is certainly the FAA’s “number one issue.” Additional regulations, including add-ons to these just-released guidelines, are expected to continue throughout 2017.

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