Chapter 11. Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)

Section 1. General

11–1–1. General

a. UAS operations are governed by the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the United States Code (USC). The type of operation, purpose of the flight, and weight of the UAS all factor into the specific rule that governs UAS operations.

b. 14 CFR Part 107, Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems. Examples of 14 CFR Part 107 operations include commercial aerial photography, commercial aerial survey, other operations for hire, and operations that are not conducted purely for pleasure/recreation. These operations will be referred to as Part 107 operations. Part 107 operations are limited to small UAS (sUAS) weighing less than 55 pounds.

c. 49 USC 44809, Exception for Limited Recreational Operations of Unmanned Aircraft Operations. Recreational flyers operate unmanned or model aircraft for pleasure or recreation. These operations are to be referred to as Recreational Flyer operations. Recreational flyers typically operate small UAS or model also called radio–controlled (RC) aircraft. Recreational flyers operating UAS weighing more than 55 pounds may operate in compliance with standards and limitations developed by a CBO and from fixed sites, which are described in subparagraph 11–4–1c1, Fixed Sites.

d. 14 CFR Part 91, UAS Operations. 14 CFR Part 91 operations include public UAS, and civil UAS 55 pounds or more Maximum Gross Operating Weight (MGOW). These operations will be referred to as Part 91 UAS operations in Chapter 11. For more information on public UAS operations, the requirements for qualification as a public operator, and how aircraft and pilots are certified, refer to AC 00–1.1, Public Aircraft Operations—Manned and Unmanned.

NOTE–
14 CFR Part 91 operations can include UAS weighing less than 55 lbs.

REFERENCE–
14 CFR Part 107, Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems.
49 USC 44809, Exception for Limited Recreational Operations of Unmanned Aircraft.
FAA Order JO 7210.3, Chapter 5, Section 5, 14 CFR Part 91, UAS Operations.
AC 00–1.1, Public Aircraft Operations—Manned and Unmanned.

11–1–2. Access to the National Airspace System (NAS) for UAS Operators

a. UAS operations must be integrated into the NAS while maintaining existing operational capacity and safety without introducing an unacceptable level of risk to airspace users or persons and property on the ground. The FAA is committed to striking the appropriate regulatory and oversight balance to ensure that American innovation is able to thrive without compromising the safest, most efficient aerospace system in the world.

b. UAS operators can access the NAS in multiple ways. Generally, UAS weighing less than 55 pounds MGOW are permitted to operate within Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) up to 400 feet Above Ground Level (AGL) in uncontrolled (Class G) airspace. Operations within controlled airspace require specific authorization from Air Traffic Control (ATC).

1. Part 107 sUAS operators can request airspace authorizations via Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC) or DroneZone to fly within Class B, Class C, Class D or within the lateral boundaries of the surface area of Class E airspace designated for an airport. Operations within controlled airspace can be readily approved in accordance with the altitude values indicated on the corresponding UAS Facility Map (UASFM). The UASFM values indicate the maximum altitude at which a UAS operation can be approved without any further coordination with the respective ATC facility. Part 107 remote pilots and operators may