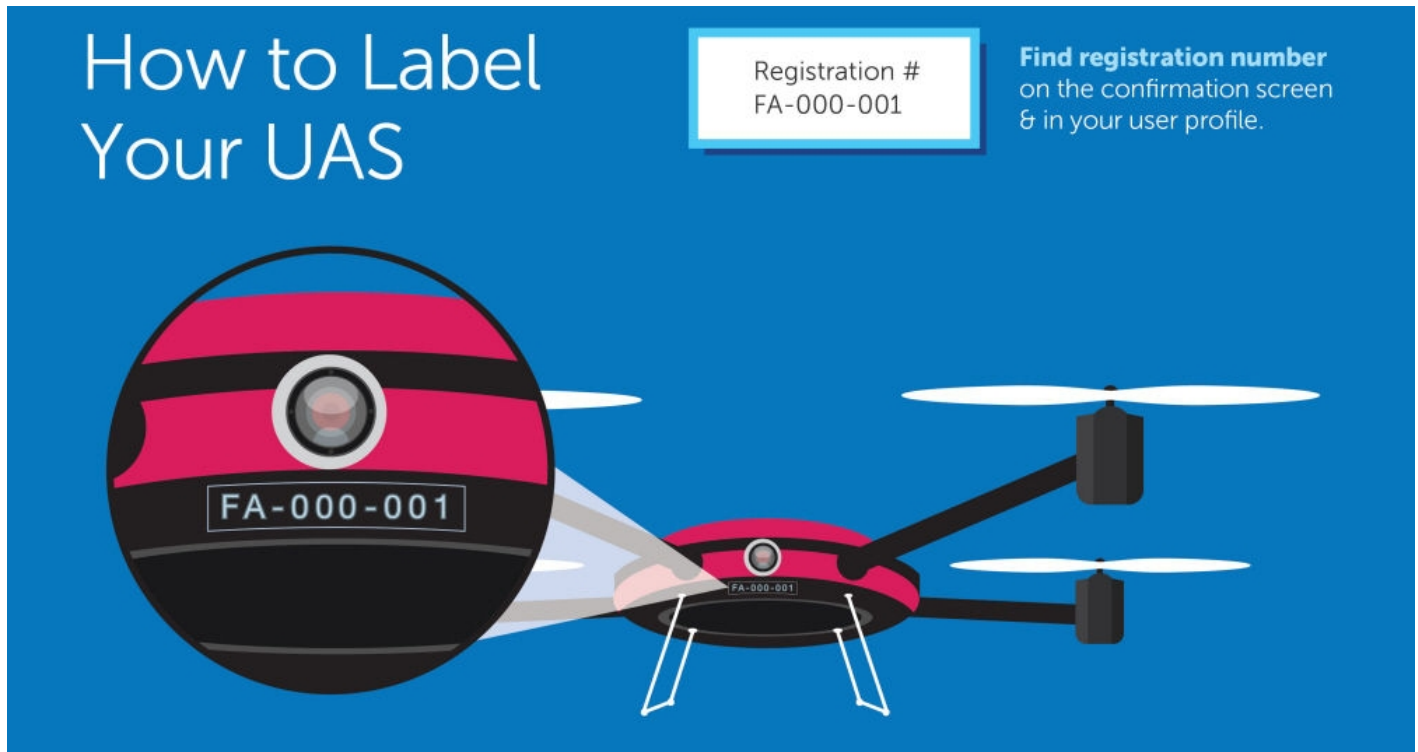




THE FAA JUST RELEASED ITS NEW DRONE RULE BOOK

News / Events / Festivals



The Federal Aviation Administration released its new book of drones rules. The summary is almost a thousand words long. The full 624 page rulebook is, at roughly 170,000 words, about as long as Joseph Heller's Catch 22. The rules are long in coming, and they have a depth that will take a while to properly explore. Here's what we know so far.

From the FAA press release:

Under the final rule, the person actually flying a drone must be at least 16 years old and have a remote pilot certificate with a small UAS rating, or be directly supervised by someone with such a certificate. To qualify for a remote pilot certificate, an individual must either pass an initial aeronautical knowledge test at an FAA-approved knowledge testing center or have an existing non-student Part 61 pilot certificate. If qualifying under the latter provision, a pilot must have completed a flight review in the previous 24 months and must take a UAS online training course provided by the FAA. The TSA will conduct a security background check of all remote pilot applications prior to issuance of a certificate.

Here are some of the salient points from the summary:

- These rules apply to unmanned vehicles weighing up to 55 pounds.
- The drone must be flown within visual line of sight of the pilot (or an observer).
- Flying first person view (like with cameras on the drone streaming video into goggles worn by

the pilot) doesn't count.

- Maximum allowed speed is 100mph.
- Can't fly more than 400 feet above ground.

Here's the specific rules for drone delivery from the summary:

Transportation of property for compensation or hire allowed provided that The aircraft, including its attached systems, payload and cargo weigh less than 55 pounds total; The flight is conducted within visual line of sight and not from a moving vehicle or aircraft; and The flight occurs wholly within the bounds of a State and does not involve transport between (1) Hawaii and another place in Hawaii through airspace outside Hawaii; (2) the District of Columbia and another place in the District of Columbia; or (3) a territory or possession of the United States and another place in the same territory or possession.

If a company or person wants to fly a drone in a way different from these rules, they can do so by applying to the FAA for a Certificate of Waiver, which if granted will give them a legal exception. The rules are a major step towards clarity in the vague world of drone law, though I'm certain there is much still to be decided and discovered in the full body of the rule.

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