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Overview

Getting Started

Recreational Flyers & Modeler Community-Based Organizations

Certificated Remote Pilots including Commercial Operators

Public Safety and Government

Educational Users

Drone Events

Critical Infrastructure & Public Venues

Advanced Operations

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Facility Maps

General

1. What are UAS Facility Maps (UASFMs)? What data do they contain?

UASFMs are job aids used by FAA Part 107 processors to help them process airspace authorization requests. They depict the maximum altitude that may be assigned by a FAA processor without additional internal FAA coordination. UAS operators may use these altitudes as a guideline when submitting their UAS Airspace Authorization requests through the *FAA DroneZone*.

2. How do maps help me as a small UAS operator?

The maps are only meant to suggest altitudes operators may want to consider when submitting their airspace authorization requests; they do not create any new types of airspace or grant approval.

3. If a map includes the area where I want to operate a UAS, does that mean I can fly without authorization?

No, the maps are for informational purposes only; they are meant to provide data that helps operators submit airspace authorization requests that can be quickly processed by FAA personnel. An operator must obtain an airspace authorization to operate in controlled airspace in accordance with the Small UAS Rule (part 107).

Programs, Partnerships & Opportunities

Research & Development

Resources & Other Topics

UAS en Español

Contact Us

Submitting your Airspace Authorization request using the altitude on the maps does not guarantee approval; all airspace authorization requests are assessed to determine the impact on the safety of the National Airspace System.

4. When will UASFMs be available to the public?

The first subset of UASFMs (approximately 200) was released on April 27, 2017. Additional facility maps will be released every 56 days, coinciding with the 56-day aeronautical chart production schedule. The FAA plans to release more than 900 UASFMs over the next 12 months.

5. Why aren't all the maps being released at the same time?

Maps are being released using a risk-based phased implementation approach. This approach permits the FAA time to carefully review the impact of releasing maps, identify potential safety implications, and address potential problems quickly if identified.

6. How can I access the maps?

Maps are available on our map page(link is external)

7. Where can I go if I have additional questions?

Questions may be emailed to UAShelp@faa.gov(link sends email). As additional information becomes available it will be posted at www.faa.gov/uas.

8. Have Department of Defense (DoD) facilities been notified of the mapping process?

Yes, the DoD has been briefed on the UAS Facility Map process. The FAA currently manually processes requests into controlled airspace delegated to DoD facilities. UAS Operators are responsible for staying clear of 99.7 Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs).

9. How were the altitudes determined on UASFMs?

Local airport facility Air Traffic Controllers, staff, and managers worked collaboratively to determine UASFM altitudes. These FAA employees reviewed manned aviation approach and departure procedures, aircraft and helicopter operations, and a variety of other factors to determine where small UAS operations could operate safely. If a request for an operation includes an altitude above what is displayed on the UASFM, it may still be approved but would need coordination with the facility and additional FAA safety analysis.

10. Does the 5-mile notification requirement still apply for recreational UAS operators who want to fly near airports?

No. A new law was enacted in 2018 (USC 44809) that requires recreational flyers to obtain an airspace authorization prior to operating in controlled airspace. Click here to learn more about the rules for recreational flyers.

Back to top

Map Updates

11. How can I be sure the maps are up to date?

Updates to the maps will coincide with the 56-day aeronautical chart production schedule. When published(link is external), the UASFM will include an "effective date".

12. How will maps be updated?

Air Traffic Control facilities will update maps periodically as operational procedures change to enhance safety and efficiency. Changes to UASFMs will be released to the public in conjunction with the 56-day chart cycle.

Back to top

Map Contents and Specific Circumstances

13. How large are the UAS Facility Map (UASFM) grid boxes?

The UASFM grid parameters are 1 minute of latitude by 1 minute of longitude; in most of the contiguous 48 states, this equates to one square mile or approximately 600 acres. The actual size of UASFM grids in Alaska may vary slightly.

14. What airspaces are included in the maps?

Maps were created for all Class B, C, & D and E Surface Areas.

15. How will maps affect a Terminal Radar Service Area (TRSA)?

TRSAs are not airspace classes and thus not part of the UASFM process.

16. If Tower personnel made the maps, what about the surface areas between them within busy complex Terminal Radar Facilities?

Towers, Terminal Radar, and En Route facilities collaborated to develop and coordinate UAFM altitudes. The FAA will coordinate a Part 107 airspace authorization with all air traffic facilities that could be

potentially impacted by the flight.

17. Is the altitude displayed on the map Above Ground Level (AGL) or Mean Sea Level (MSL)?

UAS Facility Maps measure the altitude above ground level (AGL).

The maximum altitude contained in an airspace authorization is the maximum altitude a UAS Operator may fly above the ground.

18. Are areas owned by other governments automatically on a map? For example, the edge of Niagara Falls is owned by Canada.

UAS Facility Maps are provided to assist applicants who want to operate in the United States. Operators must comply with the operational rules of the country in which they are operating. The FAA may only issue airspace authorizations in the United States.

Back to top

Notification/Communication

19. Can the FAA cancel an airspace authorization after it has been approved?

Yes. The FAA may contact a UAS operator if operational conditions have changed and the sUAS operation must be canceled or temporarily suspended. Potential events that might result in canceling or suspending sUAS operations include unexpected incidents involving national security, protection of loss of property or life, or air safety. The FAA will contact the operator using the telephone number provided in the airspace authorization request.

20. If a small UAS operator has a UASFM, why do they need to submit an airspace authorization request?

Part 107 requires an airspace authorization to operate in controlled airspace. An airspace authorization is required in this airspace because the density of traditional aircraft is normally higher in these geographic areas.

Airspace authorizations promote safe operations in these higher density areas and help communicate special provisions required to operate in controlled airspace.

21. How will ATC facilities get in contact with a small UAS operator if there is an issue or problem?

Operators are required to provide valid contact information on their airspace authorization request. This contact information will be used to call the responsible person/operator if necessary.

22. When the FAA receives an airspace authorization request, will the FAA verify it is outside 14 CFR 99.7 Special Security Instruction (SSI) TFRs airspace?

No. Part 107 Operators are responsible for checking to ensure the proposed operation occurs outside all 14 CFR 99.7 TFRs and Special Use Airspace (UAS Data Delivery System(link is external)). The UASFMs and 99.7 restrictions are all available on the same website. All other TFRs are posted to the FAA's Notice to Air Missions (NOTAMs) website.

Back to top

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Flight Delay Information

Supplemental Type Certificates

Type Certificate Data Sheets (TCDS)

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Aircraft Handbooks & Manuals

Airport Diagrams

Aviation Handbooks & Manuals

Examiner & Inspector

FAA Guidance

Performance Reports & Plans

LEARN ABOUT NEXTGEN

Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen)

NextGen Today

NextGen Programs and Resources

Performance Reporting and Benefits

VISIT OTHER FAA SITES

Airmen Inquiry

Airmen Online Services

N-Number Lookup

FAA Mobile

FAA Safety Team

Frequently Asked Questions

POLICIES, RIGHTS & LEGAL

About DOT

Budget and Performance

Civil Rights

FOIA

Information Quality

No FEAR Act

Office of Inspector General

Privacy Policy

USA.gov

Web Policies and Notices

Web Standards

Menu