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Changes to FAU UAS (Drone) Policies

Highlights:

- Effective January 1, 2022, all state institutions are required to begin phasing out the use of drones not on the new Florida DMS list of approved manufacturers.
- The five approved manufactures are Skydio, Parrot, Altavian, Teal Drones, and Vantage Robotics.
- Any drone user that wishes to continue the use of an unapproved drone past July 1, 2022, must submit a detailed plan on how they will discontinue the use of the unapproved drone by January 01, 2023.
- In light of the above mandates, the SUS institutions presented a request for modifications to the above requirements which the State is considering that would allow for the submission of waivers to the rule as well as prolonging the transition period for drones that would need to be phased out.
- Although it is likely that the original order will be revised, we thought it critical for drone users at FAU to be considering alternatives to the use of existing equipment should a waiver not be granted.
- We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available and provide assistance wherever possible.

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Proposed Rule:

QUESTION	ANSWER
I currently need to buy a drone for university business. What should I do?	If you can't find a drone to meet your needs from one of the 5 State-approved manufacturers, you need to postpone your purchase until the State finalizes the procurement rules. There is language currently being considered that would allow for a State agency to request a waiver for the purchase or acquisition of a drone not on the approved list. We expect additional guidance from the State within the next 30-60 days.
I currently have a drone that isn't manufactured by one of the 5 State-approved manufacturers. Can I still use it?	According to the current language in the rule, you can use that drone until 1/1/23. By 7/1/22, the university will be required to submit a plan as to how any unauthorized drones will be phased out by 1/1/23. There is language currently being considered that would allow for the submission of a continued use justification as to why a particular drone not from an approved manufacture is necessary for the operation of a State agency. In order to ensure compliance with this 7/1/22 reporting date, EH&S is asking all drone owners to complete the included UAS Registration Form so we can account for your drone in our external reporting as well as provide you with support in creating a proposed continued use justification should that option be available.
I built a drone from parts. How does that fit into this new rule?	There is language currently being considered that would allow for any drones built from commercially available, domestic-made parts, and solely intended for research purposes at State Universities and Colleges to be exempt from this rule.

For those interested in more information, see below:

As an agency of the State of Florida, Florida Atlantic University is subject to procurement directives of The Florida Department of Management Services (DMS). On January 1, 2022, DMS implemented drone procurement guidelines that significantly limits the drone manufactures approved for governmental agency use. These new guidelines are part of Senate Bill 44 which detail the minimal security requirements for the governmental agency use of drones. The updated DMS guidance provides an exclusive list of five (5) approved drone manufactures for governmental agencies. The five approved manufactures are Skydio, Parrot, Altavian, Teal Drones, and Vantage Robotics. No other drone manufactures are approved for governmental agency use either via purchase or through work with a contracted vendor.

The State's goal is to eliminate governmental agency use of drones not manufactured by an approved vendor, by July 1, 2022. Any FAU department still using a drone from a non-approved manufacturer past July 1st would need to submit a written plan to Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) detailing how the department will update their equipment to achieve compliance by January 1, 2023. Only drones manufactured by the five approved vendors will be approved for FAU business beginning January 1, 2023.

The State University System presented rebuttal language to the proposed rule that would seek to accomplish the following:

- Introduction of a waiver system to allow for the purchase or acquisition of a drone not on the approved list;
- The ability to submit an explanation as to why the use of a current drone not on the approved list is necessary for the operations of the governmental agency; and,
- Extend the deadline to replace any non-compliant drones to June 30, 2023.

The State is considering these changes and we expect to know the outcome within the next 30-60 days. EH&S understands how these new requirements will disrupt ongoing research, emergency response plans and a host of other drone-related activities. EH&S is committed to supporting the FAU community with the potential challenges related to updating current equipment.

Please contact Arnie Harrison, University Risk Manager, aharrison@fau.edu, for additional guidance on this matter.

For Drone Pilot and Registration Form, **click here.**