CIVIL AIR PATROL

Frequently Asked Questions

sUAS System Transition

What is changing?

In response to new federal restrictions, CAP is changing how it manages non-blue small, uncrewed aircraft systems (sUAS), meaning those not listed on the Department of Defense's Blue List, including DJI products.

Why is this changing?

Federal rules now prohibit any federal connection (funds, land, or facilities) to non-blue systems.

Is this an FAA rule or a Department of War requirement?

No. This is not an FAA airworthiness or flight rule. Every drone CAP operates, blue or non-blue, must still be FAA-registered as before. The restriction comes from the FCC, which added foreign-produced UAS and UAS critical components (including DJI) to its Covered List, an official catalog of equipment the FCC has determined poses an unacceptable risk to U.S. national security or the safety of U.S. persons, blocking new FCC equipment authorizations for those systems. The FCC took this step following a national security determination by the Department of War under the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Separately, CAP prohibits any federal connection for non-blue systems: no federal (appropriated) funds may support their maintenance, supplies, or FAA registration, and they cannot be used on federal land, at federal facilities, or on any mission where CAP serves as the Department of the Air Force Auxiliary. See the FCC's Covered List at fcc.gov/supplychain/coveredlist and the Blue List at bluelist.dcma.mil.

Who is affected?

Wing and region commanders, DOs, sUAS pilots and technicians, and any wing currently operating non-blue systems.

When does this take effect?

Communication on this change began in March 2026. NHQ will accept turn-ins for federally funded systems after the annual inventory is complete on **30 November 2026**; wings can begin preparing their equipment for turn-in now to ensure it's ready to ship once turn-ins open.

What happens to systems purchased with federal funds?

They must be returned to the NHQ warehouse for disposal.

Can wings keep donated or corporate-funded systems?

Yes, until **30 September 2027**, but only for corporate missions, provided the wing funds all associated costs.

Can wings buy or accept new non-blue systems?

No. Going forward, both new purchases with corporate funds and new donations are

prohibited.

Is CAP still investing in sUAS?

Yes. CAP has authorized the purchase of 29 new rotary mission systems and will continue to expedite acquisition of a modern, compliant fleet.

What about AE/STEM Kit drones?

These are paused pending separate guidance; this change does not address kit disposition.

Where can people get help?

Directorate of Operations (DO): do@capnhq.gov