

Deadline Approaching to Comply with Drone Registration

Amundsen Davis Aerospace Alert
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Time is running out – **all drone operators must register by next week, February 19, 2015.** The Unmanned Aircraft System Registration Program went into effect on December 21st, just in time to capture the Christmas rush.

The UAS registration program is the FAA's initial effort to regulate the millions of drones expected to be operated in the United States this year. The registration requirement applies to small UAS weighing more than 0.55 pounds and less than 55 pounds (sUAS). The FAA actually took the time to explain that the registration program does not apply to paper airplanes, toy balloons and Frisbees. Beyond that, registrations are a must – even if you are only flying a sUAS in your own yard.

To be clear, this registration is an absolute requirement and carries potential civil penalties up to \$27,500 for noncompliance. The operator must have the certificate in his or her possession (although an electronic version is sufficient). Once registered, you must affix your registration number to any sUAS that you operate; although you can use the same registration number on multiple drones.

The rationale is that drones are considered to be “aircraft” and all civil “aircraft” must be registered. While admitting that this registration requirement is essentially useless to prevent someone that wishes to use a drone for nefarious purposes, the FAA stated registration “helps ensure safety” and “encourages a culture of accountability.”

The process is easy enough – and can be completed online within a few minutes, **here**. If, however, you chose to save the \$5 registration fee, be prepared to abandon your unregistered sUAS that accidentally lands in your cranky neighbor's yard. One call from the FAA is likely to bring a \$1000 civil penalty, and maybe worse.