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Federal Aviation
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InFO

Information for Operators

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http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/info

An InFO contains valuable information for operators that should help them meet certain administrative, regulatory, or operational requirements with relatively low urgency or impact on safety.

Subject: Use of Reflective Vests by Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) Remote Pilots

Purpose: This InFO serves to inform sUAS remote pilots on techniques for clearly identifying and legitimizing themselves to the general public and law enforcement.

Background: With the rapid increase in sUAS activity, combined with the technology and regulations being relatively new, the general public and law enforcement can be uninformed of what, when, how, and where sUAS are legally permitted to be flown. Additionally, the public perceives some sUAS operations as threatening to their safety or privacy, in part because remote pilots are not easily identifiable.

Discussion: Law enforcement agencies and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have reported an increase in the number of calls and complaints regarding sUAS activity. A significant number of these calls are regarding compliant sUAS operations. Calls like these are not actionable and tie up resources otherwise meant for public safety functions. At the same time, sUAS operators are reportedly being questioned by law enforcement and members of the public while operating a sUAS safely and legally. These interruptions can negatively affect flight safety by distracting the sUAS flight crew from their primary duties.

Recommended Action: In order to help bolster public awareness of sUAS operations and reduce the number of calls and distractions, the FAA recommends that remote pilots and other sUAS flight crew members wear brightly colored and reflective vests during flight operations. By taking this simple action, the sUAS flight crew can demonstrate that they are accepting responsibility for the activity and that they are intending to operate in a safe and compliant manner. The vest should have wording on the back identifying the individual as the remote pilot, visual observer, or crew. The vests should have the wording such as "Drone Pilot Please Do Not Disturb", "Drone Pilot Stand Clear", "Drone Pilot" or similar warnings against distracting the person wearing it. It is also recommended that other crew members, especially the visual observers, have vests stating their designation as part of the flight crew with similar wording not to disturb them while performing their duties.

A vest as described above is easily distinguishable and often used by other safety-centric personnel such as construction and utility workers, airport ground crews, and railway personnel. The vest may reduce the likelihood that someone will approach or query an sUAS crew member engaged in safety-sensitive duties and will also help preserve a "sterile cockpit" for these operations.

Contact: Questions or comments regarding this InFO should be directed to the General Aviation and Commercial Division (AFS-800) at 202-267-1100