

NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.291

National Policy

Effective Date:
3/24/15

Cancellation Date:
3/24/16

SUBJ: Inspection and Maintenance Program Requirements for Airworthiness
Certification of Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operating Under 55 Pounds

1. Purpose of This Notice. This notice provides guidance regarding exclusion from Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Order 8900.1, Volume 8, Chapter 5. This exclusion concerns inspection and maintenance program requirements for airworthiness certification of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) with an operating weight of fewer than 55 pounds. This notice supports a deviation issued by the Aircraft Certification Service (AIR) to Memorandum Number AIR100015-110-DM44 and the current edition of FAA Order 8130.34, Airworthiness Certification of Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Optionally Piloted Aircraft.

2. Audience. The primary audience for this notice is Flight Standards Service (AFS) personnel who participate in airworthiness certification of UAS with an operating weight of fewer than 55 pounds. The secondary audience may include other FAA management, operational, and administrative employees, as appropriate.

3. Where You Can Find This Notice. You can find this notice on the MyFAA employee Web site at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices/. Inspectors can access this notice through the Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS) at <http://fsims.avs.faa.gov>. Operators can find this notice on the FAA's Web site at <http://fsims.faa.gov>. This notice is available to the public at http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices/.

4. Background. Unmanned aircraft are inherently different from manned aircraft and introducing them into the nation's airspace is an opportunity and a challenge for both the FAA and the aviation community. FAA rules and policies must provide flexibility to accommodate this integration while ensuring the safety of the National Airspace System (NAS). To accomplish this task, the FAA is taking an incremental approach to safe integration as it acquires a better understanding of operational issues such as training requirements, operational specifications, airworthiness, and technology. As we integrate unmanned aircraft into the NAS, we are developing new policies, procedures, and approval processes to deal with the increasing civilian operations.

5. Action. AIR and AFS personnel who support the airworthiness certification of a UAS with an operating weight of fewer than 55 pounds must confirm the following:

a. Written, Self-Certifying Statement. Applicants must provide the FAA with a written, self-certifying statement that they have an established inspection and maintenance program for the continued airworthiness of the aircraft.

b. Operating Limitations Contents. Per deviation memorandum AIR 100-15-110-DM44 issued March 4, 2015, the inspection and maintenance requirements listed in Appendix A of FAA Order 8130.34C are not required to be listed in the operating limitations for unmanned aircraft operated at less than 55 pounds.

6. Deviations to This Notice. It is necessary to adhere to procedures in this notice to achieve uniform administration of this directive material. The Aircraft Maintenance Division (AFS-300) must approve any deviations to this notice.

7. Distribution. This notice will be distributed to AFS divisions located at FAA headquarters in Washington, DC; regional AFS offices at the branch level; and all certificate-holding district offices (CHDO).

8. Suggestions or Comments. AFS-300 welcomes and considers all of your suggestions or comments regarding this notice. For your convenience, use FAA Form 1320-19, Directive Feedback Information, which is located at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/forms/. Please use the "Other Comments" block on FAA Form 1320-19 to provide a complete explanation of why the suggested change is necessary. You may correct, as necessary, a copy of the pertinent information, or provide a handwritten note for consideration. Send your suggestions or comments to 9-awa-avs-designee-directives@faa.gov, where they will be reviewed and sent to the respective policy holder(s).

9. Disposition. We will incorporate the information in this notice into FAA Order 8900.1 before this notice expires. Direct questions concerning the information in this notice to AFS-300 at 202-267-1675.

ORIGINAL SIGNED by

/s/ John S. Duncan
Director, Flight Standards Service