

Drone Policy

NACD Position

NACD supports policies on unmanned aerial systems (UAS), commonly known as drones, that prioritize national security and safety. The advancement of drone technology has quickly transformed our future into reality. We acknowledge the technological value of safe and responsible drone use, and we must also recognize and anticipate the inverse. Regulations need to keep pace with the new challenges accompanying the increase in drone use, especially when it comes to protecting the security of our nation's chemical facilities and the communities that foster them.

NACD supports:

- Mandatory registration for drone operators, including the requirement to produce proper legal documentation;
- Granting law enforcement the power to land, seize, and search drones, including where unauthorized data is collected and a warrant has been issued;
- Extending the definition of exclusion zones to include chemical facilities and warehouses identified as high risk; and
- Government use of expanded technology to detect and repel unauthorized drones.

Policy background

In 2016, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released the first operational rules for routine non-hobby use of small UAS. The new rule, which took effect in late August 2016, offers safety regulations for unmanned aircraft drones weighing less than 55 pounds that are conducting non-hobbyist operations. The final rule requires drone operators to keep an unmanned aircraft within visual line of sight, restricts nighttime operations, and flying above 400 feet or near airports. Height and speed restrictions and other operational limits, such as prohibiting flights over unprotected people on the ground who aren't directly participating in the UAS operation were also set. Today, over 1.1 million recreational drones are registered with the FAA

Latest Action

Congress has enacted a law that gives the Department of Homeland Security the authority to track and take down malicious or reckless drones. Legal authority to use counter drone technology has only been granted to the departments of Homeland Security, Defense, Energy, and Justice. The FAA issued a proposed rule that would permit small drones to fly at night and over people. Current regulations require companies to secure FAA waivers in order to carry out these operations. Advancement of the rule is dependent on drone remote identification – which has not yet been proposed. Congress continues to mull over drone-specific legislation. Identification, line of sight, and federal jurisdiction continue being top legislative issues for 2020.