



Federal Aviation Administration

Memorandum

Date: November 15, 2006

From: Manager, Aircraft Engineering Division, AIR-100 *sgmc*
Manager, Production and Airworthiness Division, AIR-200 *APP*

To: SEE DISTRIBUTION

Prepared by: James Sizemore, AIR-160, (202) 385-4631 or james.sizemore@faa.gov
Richard Posey, AIR-230, (202) 267-9538 or richard.posey@faa.gov

Subject: Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Certification Status

This memorandum provides an update on the status of the efforts within AVS to allow Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) to operate in the National Airspace System (NAS). In 2005, AIR-200 took the first step and began accepting applications for Special Airworthiness Certificates in the Experimental category for UAS. This activity is based on one of the strategies identified in the Administrator's Flight Plan for, "implementing technologies and systems that will help pilots operate aircraft as safely as possible." AIR-200 issued memorandums on June 17, 2005 and July 11, 2005 announcing this activity and AVS has subsequently issued 4 Experimental Certificates since August 2005.

The decision to manage UAS activity from FAA Headquarters is to gain experience with applicants that will allow us to develop policy and procedures for Aviation Safety Inspectors (ASI) and potentially for designees. AIR-200 has developed a draft order that describes the process for issuing Experimental Certificates to UAS and will prototype its use in FY 2007. All requests for an Experimental Certificate are processed by a team established within Headquarters composed of subject matter experts from AIR-100, AIR-200, AFS-400 and the Air Traffic Organization. Applicants are required to meet criteria established in a UAS unique Program Letter and Safety Checklist. AIR-200 works directly with the Manufacturing Inspection Offices, Manufacturing Inspection District/Satellite Office, or Certificate Management Offices/Units and Flight Standards District Offices to develop and finalize operating limitations, and issue Experimental Certificates. Program Letters or applications received by field offices should be referred to AIR-200.

The Unmanned Aircraft Program Office, AIR-160, was established in February 2006, and is the focal point for all AVS UAS activity, including any proposed certification projects that may be presented to ACO's. As such, all proposed UAS type certification projects must be worked within the appropriate Directorate, as well as coordinated with AIR-160.

There has been vigorous activity in industry exploring the endless possibilities that UAS bring to aviation. There are many new and novel issues to be addressed as UAS are considered for integration into the NAS. As these issues are unique to UAS and may differ substantially from manned aircraft operations and systems, they will require consideration and special attention while this area of aviation matures. At a minimum, the certification and introduction of these systems must not degrade the current level of safety within the NAS.

AIR-100 recently requested a point of contact (POC) from each Directorate to be the focal point to assist in the development of UAS specific policies, procedures, and potential regulations. These representatives will serve as the principle member for each directorate, to include associated field activities, in the development of necessary resources and milestones needed to accomplish programmatic tasks. These projects are significant, and early program coordination between the ACO Engineer and the Directorate POC is essential. As soon as practical after the project application, the ACO Engineer must notify and promptly forward the certification project notifications and associated certification plans to the Directorate POC. The Directorate POCs are responsible for ensuring coordination of these projects with AIR-160. In addition, as members of the Headquarters Team, it is anticipated that the Directorate POCs will participate in safety reviews with applicants for Experimental Certificates.

The list of the Directorate POC's are as follows:

Transport Airplane Directorate: Steve Edgar,
(425) 277 - 2025, steve.edgar@faa.gov

Small Airplane Directorate: Gunnar Berg and Greg Davison,
(816) 329 - 4141, gunnar.berg@faa.gov
(816) 329 - 4130, gregory.davison@faa.gov

Rotorcraft Directorate: Chinh Vuong,
(817) 222 - 5116, chinh.vuong@faa.gov

Engine and Propellor Directorate: Jeorge Fernandez,
(781) 238 - 7748, jeorge.fernandez@faa.gov

The AIR Headquarters POC's are as follows:

AIR-110 Victor Powell, Lead UAS Policy
(202) 267 - 9564, victor.powell@faa.gov

AIR-160 James Sizemore, Team Lead, UAS Airworthiness and Systems Engineering
(202) 385 - 4631, james.sizemore@faa.gov

AIR-200 Richard Posey, Lead UAS Experimental Certification Policy
(202) 267 - 9538, richard.posey@faa.gov

Thank you for your cooperation and support as we continue in this exciting new regulatory challenge in civil aviation. If there are any questions, please contact James Sizemore, AIR-160, and Richard Posey, AIR-230.

Distribution:

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