

[Home \(/\)](#) » [2016 \(/stories/2016\)](#) » [January \(/stories/2016/jan\)](#)

FAA: Privately owned drone aircraft must be registered before they are flown

Emma Gallimore (</author/emma-gallimore>)

0

1

0

Jan. 16, 2016, 12:34pm (</stories/2016/jan>)

36



The Federal Aviation Administration is requiring that privately owned drone aircraft weighing up to 55 pounds be registered before they are flown.

The online registration system is live on the FAA website. Before they can fly, owners must provide the FAA with their name, home address, and email address. The FAA will issue a certificate and a registration number that has to be displayed

visibly on the drone. Owners with more than one drone can use the same registration number for all of them.

“It’s very easy,” Richard C. Balough of Balough Law Offices, told the Cook County Record. “Basically it can be done online. You have to be 13 years of age or older and a US citizen. If you have a drone that you got as a Christmas present or bought at Christmas time you can register it free ... up until mid-January.”

Previously owned unmanned aircraft systems must be registered no later than February 19, 2016. For anyone who purchased a drone after December 21, 2015, the drone must be registered prior to its first outdoor flight. The fee for registration is \$5, payable by credit card at the time of the registration.

Balough stressed these new regulations apply only to privately owned unmanned aircraft systems.

“Right now, unless you have a special permit from the FAA, if you’re flying for commercial purposes, you’re flying it illegally,” said Balough, who moderated a panel discussion on drones at the annual meeting of the American Bar Association’s Business Law Section. “That’s the way the FAA has interpreted their authority and their rules.”

Regulations for commercial drones are under review by the FAA. For now, the focus is on drones for recreational use.

Drones were one of the hot toys this holiday season, for both adults and children. In December, the FAA estimated that more than 1 million drones would end up under Christmas trees this season. The Consumer Technology Association released a more conservative estimate of 400,000 drones for the holidays.

Because of their speed and maneuverability drones are fun to fly, but can also be dangerous to bystanders and aircraft if used irresponsibly. Since most drones have cameras, their use can raise questions of privacy. Last year, a drone pilot was arrested when he flew his drone too close to the White House.

When asked if he thought rules for drones would be tightened over time, Balough said, "I think the FAA is going to wait and see for a while as to what it wants to do."

For now, the penalties for failing to register include a civil fine up to \$27,500 and criminal penalties of up to \$250,000 and imprisonment. The severity of the penalty would most likely be determined on a case by case basis.

In addition to registering their aircraft, Balough advised users to also follow basic safety precautions: fly below 400 feet and keep the drone in sight; never fly near aircraft, airports, or emergency responders; and never fly over large groups of people.

Organizations in this story

Balough Law Offices, LLC

(/organizations/644574029-balough-law-offices-llc/stories)

1 N LaSalle Blvd

Chicago, IL 60602

More Stories

Reverse Mortgage Solutions accuses homonymous company of holding its name for ransom (/stories/510658321-reverse-mortgage-solutions-accuses-homonymous-company-of-holding-its-name-for-ransom)

Dispute over who should develop Pullman Park property headed to appellate court (/stories/510658316-dispute-over-who-should-develop-pullman-park-property-headed-to-appellate-court)

Judge clears lawsuit alleging Chicago cops urged lenders to repossess impounded cars (/stories/510658304-judge-clears-lawsuit-alleging-chicago-cops-urged-lenders-to-repossess-impounded-cars)

97-year-old man's injuries triggers lawsuit against Atrium Health (/stories/510658273-97-year-old-man-s-injuries-triggers-lawsuit-against-atrium-health)

Pedestrian alleges Presence Mercy liable for injuries from icy sidewalk (/stories/510658250-pedestrian-alleges-presence-mercy-liable-for-injuries-from-icy-sidewalk)

Appeals panel: Airlines aren't breaching contract when put passengers' checked bags on separate flights (/stories/510658207-appeals-panel-airlines-aren-t-breaching-contract-when-put-passengers-checked-bags-on-separate-flights)

Ill. man blames Horizon Village Apartments for not keeping walkway safe for pedestrians (/stories/510658052-ill-man-blames-horizon-village-apartments-for-not-keeping-walkway-safe-for-pedestrians)

Patient sues Midland Orthopedic surgeon for foot surgery allegedly gone awry (/stories/510658045-patient-sues-midland-orthopedic-surgeon-for-foot-surgery-allegedly-gone-awry)

Glenview Terrace Nursing Center accused of violating Nursing Home Care Act (/stories/510658020-glenview-terrace-nursing-center-accused-of-violating-nursing-home-care-act)



Arguments

All ▾

Madigan comes up short on SB 1229 override (/stories/510637028-madigan-comes-up-short-on-sb-1229-override)

Most Read

Napleton Auto Group RICO suit says Fiat Chrysler dealer incentive program inflates sales figures (/stories/510657760-napleton-auto-group-rico-suit-says-fiat-chrysler-dealer-incentive-program-inflates-sales-figures)

Patient blames Walgreens pharmacist for bad drug interaction (/stories/510657234-patient-blames-walgreens-pharmacist-for-bad-drug-interaction)

Judge clears nationwide lawsuit to proceed vs Rustoleum over 'latent defects' in Restore deck products (/stories/510658013-judge-clears-nationwide-lawsuit-to-proceed-vs-rustoleum-over-latent-defects-in-restore-deck-products)

Customer alleges Tortas Frontera's shattered glass caused her injuries (/stories/510657236-customer-alleges-tortas-frontera-s-shattered-glass-caused-her-injuries)

Lottery winners, rebuffed in federal court, bring class action in Cook to collect interest on winnings (/stories/510657587-lottery-winners-rebuffed-in-federal-court-bring-class-action-in-cook-to-collect-interest-on-winnings)

News Archives

2016 (/stories/2016)

2015 (/stories/2015)

2014 (/stories/2014)

2013 (/stories/2013)