

FAA Sets Deadlines to Register Small Drones

After you unwrap that new holiday drone, you'll need to register it with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) before you fly it outside.

The FAA announced that drones that weigh between a half pound and 55 pounds, including payload, and were purchased for use after December 21, 2015 must be registered before flying outside. And for those who already own a drone, the FAA has granted a grace period to register until February 19, 2016. Registration is free until January 20, 2016, after which a \$5 fee will be levied.

A U.S. citizen who uses a drone for non-business purposes may register on the new FAA website at <http://www.faa.gov/uas/registration>. For drones used for businesses and non-U.S. citizens, corporations, partnerships, or other entities, registration must be made by a paper filing with the FAA. A website for these latter users may be available in the Spring 2016.

Drone owners must provide their name, home address, and e-mail address for applications filed online. After the drone is registered, the FAA will issue a Certificate of Registration/Proof of Ownership good for three years, which includes a unique identification number for the owner. The Certificate must be in the possession of the person flying the drone and the ID number must be marked on the drone. If a person owns more than one drone, the same number may be used for all drones.

Penalties for failure to register include a civil fine of up to \$27,500 and criminal penalties of fines up to \$250,000 and/or imprisonment for up to three years.

In 2014, Richard C. Balough moderated a panel discussion on drones at the American Bar Association's Business Law Section annual meeting. He also wrote an article on the legal status of drones in the Summer 2015 issue of SciTech Lawyer magazine.

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