

ALERTS

Aviation Law Alert - FAA Simplifies COA Procedure For § 333 Exemption Holders

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On March 24, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced a new policy that allows quicker authorization to use unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) for those that have received a Section 333 exemption. The FAA is hopeful that this new process will help bring the U.S. one step closer to a final UAS rule and eventually full integration of small unmanned aircraft into the national airspace. In the meantime, this change allows companies to more quickly integrate UAS into their own business operations.

The old system required Section 333 exemption holders to individually apply for and receive a Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) for each UAS operation—a process that could take up to 60 days.

Under the new rule, a limited COA is automatically granted to each exemption recipient. The “blanket” authorization allows UAS operation at or below 200 feet for any aircraft that weighs less than 55 pounds as long as it is operated during the day, in the visual-line-of-sight of its operator, and stays certain distances away from airports, heliports, and other restricted airspace. Anyone who would like to operate unmanned aircraft outside of these limits must still obtain a COA for that specific operation.

For more information, contact the Barnes & Thornburg attorney with whom you work, or Clifford Maine at Clifford.Maine@btlaw.com or 616-742-3944 or Connie Lahn at Connie.Lahn@btlaw.com or 612-367-8706.

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