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DOT Announces Development of Drone Registration Requirements

On Oct. 19, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Anthony Foxx and Michael Huerta, administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), [announced](#) the creation of a task force to develop recommendations by Nov. 20, 2015, for a registration process for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) with a goal of implementation by mid-December. Specifically, the task force will be composed of 25 to 30 representatives from the UAS and manned aviation industries, the federal government, and other stakeholders. The panel will advise DOT on which aircraft should be required to register and which should be exempt because of a low safety risk, including toys and certain other small UAS. The task force will also explore options for a streamlined system that would aim to make registration less burdensome for commercial UAS operators. Additional safety recommendations may be put forth as the task force deems appropriate.

The announcement comes in response to the growing number of reports of potentially unsafe UAS operations including some near commercial flights and wildfire fighting areas in the West. There are concerns with the announcement regarding both the expedited timeline put forth by Foxx as well as possible restrictions on regulating model aircraft contained in the current FAA authorization law.

This task force is separate from the [ongoing efforts at FAA to finalize regulations](#) for the operation of commercial UAS. Currently, operation of a UAS for commercial purposes is illegal unless the operator has received an [exemption from the FAA](#). Foxx hopes to conclude this effort by June 2016. For a complete review of state legislation on UAS, [click here](#).