



# National Protection and Programs Directorate

14 September 2018

## Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems During Hurricane Florence Response and Recovery Operations—Guidance for the Private Sector

The [Federal Aviation Administration](#) (FAA) is warning drone owners and operators they may face significant fines if they interfere with emergency response operations in the areas affected by Hurricane Florence. Many aircraft that are conducting life-saving missions and other critical response and recovery efforts are likely to be flying at low altitudes over areas affected by the storm. Flying a drone without authorization in or near the disaster area may unintentionally disrupt rescue operations and violate federal, state, or local laws and ordinances, even if a [Temporary Flight Restriction](#) (TFR) is not in place. Allow first responders to save lives and property without interference.

Private sector drone operators with an [FAA Certificate of Authorization](#) (COA) or flying under [Part 107](#) who want to support response and recovery operations are strongly encouraged to coordinate their activities with the local incident commander responsible for the area in which they want to operate (more details are below).

Here is the information the FAA may require:

- the unmanned aircraft type
- a PDF copy of a current FAA COA
- the pilot's Part 107 certificate number
- details about the proposed flight (date, time, location, altitude, direction and distance to the nearest airport, and latitude/longitude)
- nature of the event (assessment of critical infrastructure due to natural disaster) and the pilot's qualification information.

If drone operators need to fly in controlled airspace or a disaster TFR to support the response and recovery, operators must contact the FAA's System Operations Support Center (SOSC) by emailing [9-ATOR-HQ-SOSC@faa.gov](mailto:9-ATOR-HQ-SOSC@faa.gov) the information they need to authorize access to the airspace. Coordination with the SOSC may also include a requirement that a drone operator obtain support from the appropriate incident commander, coordinated through a state or regional Air Boss:

**Virginia** Region III RRCC: Lisa Brennan, 202-360-1993, [lisa.brennan@dot.gov](mailto:lisa.brennan@dot.gov).

**North Carolina** North Carolina Emergency Management: Gary Thompson, 919-819-0401, [gary.thompson@nc.dps.gov](mailto:gary.thompson@nc.dps.gov); FAA: Gary Miller, 202-365-7371, [gary.w.miller@FAA.gov](mailto:gary.w.miller@FAA.gov).

**South Carolina** Air Operations: LTC Ian Toogood, 803-737-8884, [aob@emd.sc.gov](mailto:aob@emd.sc.gov); FAA: Andy Gold (202-400-0988), Eric Cady (202-384-8493), Ryan Keenley (703-727-8654)

**Georgia** Georgia State Patrol: Greg Mercier, 404-983-7880, [gamercier@gsp.net](mailto:gamercier@gsp.net); FAA: Geoff Lelliott, 404-305-5645, [geoff.elliott@faa.gov](mailto:geoff.elliott@faa.gov).