

# USA to Relax Laws Surrounding Drones

In a move that's set to bolster the commercial drone industry, the U.S. Department of Transport has proposed new rules that will allow drones to fly overnight and over people without waivers under certain conditions, further integrating drones into the national airspace system.

Commercial drones and the data they collect are continuing to make a significant impact on efficiency and effectiveness across a wide range of industries. However, current rules limit the commercial marketplace from fully taking advantage of technology. The new rules are likely to allow companies the opportunity to fly commercial drones in urban and suburban environments, in cities, and over people.

U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Elaine Chao, said the regulatory actions would attempt to balance the need to mitigate safety risks without inhibiting technological and operational advances.

Chao stressed that drones would only be able to operate under these new conditions if the operator has received appropriate training, completed approved testing, and if the drone was equipped with anti-collision lighting.

Chao also said the DOT was "keenly aware" that there were legitimate public concerns about drones, concerning safety, security and privacy. "Recent events overseas have underscored concerns about the potential for drones to disrupt aviation and the national airspace."

In an effort to combat this, the DOT has also announced a Drone Traffic Management Pilot Project. The Pilot Project is distinct, but complementary to, the traditional FAA's air traffic management system. It intends to develop and demonstrate a traffic management system to safely integrate drone flights within the nation's airspace system.

The FAA said it would seek public input to identify major drone safety and security issues that may pose a threat to other aircraft, to people on the ground, or to national security.

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