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Production Alert: Seven Companies Allowed To Operate Small UAS (Drones) Following FAA-Approved Safety Procedures

The Federal Aviation Administration has granted regulatory exemptions to seven aerial photo and video production companies, the first step in allowing the film and television industry the use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) in the National Airspace System.

Currently, these are the **only** seven firms allowed to operate UAS:

- Astraeus Aerial
- Aerial MOB, LLC
- Flying-Cam, Inc.
- HekiVideo Productions, LLC
- Pictorvision Inc.
- RC Pro Productions Consulting, LLC dba Vortex Aerial
- Snaproll Media, LLC

In the agreement with the FAA, these seven firms agreed to guidelines that include the following:

- UAS operators must hold private pilot certificates and current third-class medical certificates.
- The UAS must be kept within the line of sight of the pilot at all times.
- The UAS must weigh less than 55 pounds.
- Flights will be restricted to the "sterile area" on the set.
- Aircraft must be inspected before each flight.
- Operations at night are prohibited.
- The UAS may not be flown at a speed exceeding 50 knots.
- Flights must be operated at an altitude of no more than 400 feet above ground level.
- All operations must utilize a visual observer.
- During training, proficiency and experience-building flights, all persons not essential for flight operations are considered non-participants and the UAS must be operated with appropriate distance from non-participants.

- The operator must ensure that no persons are allowed within 500 feet of the area except those consenting to be involved and necessary for the film production. This provision may be reduced to no less than 200 feet if it would not adversely affect safety.
- Each UAS operation must be completed within 30 minutes flight time or with 25% battery power remaining, whichever occurs first.
- The operator must obtain an Air Traffic Organization (ATO) issued Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) prior to conducting any operations under this grant of exemption. This COA will also require the operator to request a Notice to Airman (NOTAM) not more than 72 hours in advance, but not less than 48 hours prior to the operation.
- At least three days before scheduled filming, the UAS operator must submit a written Plan of Activities.
- The UAS must remain clear and yield the right of way to all other manned operations and activities at all times.
- The UAS cannot be operated from any moving device or vehicle.
- The UAS may not be operated less than 500 feet below or less than 2,000 feet horizontally from a cloud or when visibility is less than 3 statute miles from the operator.

To view the FAA's full list of operating guidelines go to:

http://www.faa.gov/uas/legislative_programs/section_333/

For more information on the FAA and UAS, go to:

<http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/uas/>

For information on aerial and helicopter filming in California, go to:

www.film.ca.gov/LocationTools_HelicopterFilminginCA.htm

About the California Film Commission

The California Film Commission (CFC) enhances California's status as the leader in motion picture, television and commercial production. A one-stop office for filmmakers, the Commission supports productions of all sizes and budgets. Services include film and TV tax credits, an extensive digital location library, free online permitting, low cost use of state properties as shooting locations, and production assistance.

www.film.ca.gov