



# Interagency Aviation Safety Alert



No. IA SA 14-03

Date: June 25, 2014

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**Subject: Conflicts with Civilian Unmanned Aircraft & Hobbyist/Remote Controlled Aircraft**

**Area of Concern: Aviation Safety**

**Distribution: All Aviation Operations**

**Discussion:** Recently, a private citizen launched a DJI Phantom unmanned aircraft in order to acquire video of the Two Bulls fire approximately 10 miles northwest of Bend, Oregon. Although the aircraft remained outside of the TFR, it serves as a reminder that this emerging hazard is becoming more common due to their reduction in cost and the public's interest in fire and natural disasters. These factors pose significant potential to interfere with our mission and therefore imperative that local aviation managers (UAO/FAO) and Incident Management Teams (IMTs) attempt to mitigate this hazard.

UAO/FAOs and IMTs should communicate/coordinate with the local media in order to educate the affected region's public on unmanned aircraft (UAS and model aircraft) operations and how it can pose greater risk to the incident aircraft and inhibit response efforts if aircraft are forced to divert and/or abort their missions. Local law enforcement should also be engaged so that they can act on any reports of unauthorized activity. If that occurs, notify the FAA and provide them with the LE agency and operator's contact information so that they can follow up with the appropriate enforcement action. Last, be sure to submit a SAFECOM for tracking and trending purposes.

Unauthorized UAS or remote controlled aircraft operations in close proximity to incidents can manifest in other unique ways as well. Some have sought to make this a business opportunity in that individuals or businesses offer data that can be collected with these types of unmanned aircraft. **This type of commercial operation is not currently authorized by the FAA, DOI or USFS.** Any attempt by an individual to fly an unmanned aircraft for commercial purposes on an incident should be reported. DOI and USFS are determining the potential integration of UAS into the incident environment via a deliberative process.



Increased unmanned aircraft activity presents hazards to ALL aviation users, including resource operations. Most commonly (but not exclusively), unmanned aircraft will be operating within close proximity to terrain thus increasing risk for low level resource operations. Resource operations including reconnaissance and aerial application with extremely limited reaction time usually operate without the protection a TFR provides within most incident operations. Partner organizations including states and other cooperators performing manned resource operations must also become aware of this hazard. Timely communication across jurisdictional boundaries amongst all parties through dispatch centers and partner contacts is essential to the successful mitigation of this hazard and flight safety in general.

Authorized unmanned activity is approved by Certificate of Authorization (COA) from the FAA. This also highlights the importance of flight crews checking NOTAMS prior to flying as any approved unmanned operation will be required to have the appropriate NOTAM in place. Questions pertaining to the use of unmanned aircraft should be directed to the DOI UAS Specialist or USFS Aviation Safety Manager.

### **UAS and Model Aircraft Operations Informational Links:**

DOI UAS Policy:

[http://oas.doi.gov/library/opm/CY2013/OPM\\_13-11.pdf](http://oas.doi.gov/library/opm/CY2013/OPM_13-11.pdf)

FAA Initiative, Model Aircraft Do's and Don'ts:

[http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/uas/model\\_aircraft\\_operators/](http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/uas/model_aircraft_operators/)

FAA UAS Myth busting:

<http://www.faa.gov/news/updates/?newsId=76381>

FAA COA and UAS FAQs:

[http://www.faa.gov/about/office\\_org/headquarters\\_offices/ato/service\\_units/systemops/aim/organizations/uas/coa/faq/](http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ato/service_units/systemops/aim/organizations/uas/coa/faq/)

FAA reporting:

[http://www.faa.gov/contact/safety\\_hotline/](http://www.faa.gov/contact/safety_hotline/)



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