Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)

Wiley Rein has been engaged in unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) matters since the outset of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) opening the door to commercial uses. Drawing on its wealth of experience representing clients before regulatory agencies, obtaining necessary authorizations and licenses, and advising clients on regulatory obligations, Wiley Rein has been significantly involved in the evolving legal landscape of UAS. Wiley Rein represents clients from the telecom, media, insurance, commerce, aviation, agriculture, higher education, and manufacturing sectors.

Wiley Rein’s comprehensive UAS Working Group is well-suited to assist clients on multiple fronts in this unique, complex, and dynamic area. The UAS Working Group includes lawyers, policy advisors, and engineers experienced in aviation issues at the FAA, as well as privacy considerations at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), and Congress, and spectrum needs being examined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), NTIA, U.S. Department of State, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and industry working groups.

Our representative experience includes:

- Advising clients on the domestic and international spectrum issues for UAS command and control and payloads for both within visual line-of-sight and beyond visual line-of-sight uses;
- Monitoring state and local legislation and regulation and assessing the role federal preemption will play in the deployment of UAS;
- Consulting with multiple industry sectors to evaluate their operational requirements and counsel them on UAS compliance;
- Evaluating newsgathering and First Amendment considerations associated with UAS for media clients;
- Analyzing insurance and risk management considerations associated with commercial use of UAS;
- Meeting with FAA staff to discuss regulatory developments and advocate for clients’ policy needs;
- Monitoring privacy developments at the federal, state, and local levels and assisting clients in participating in NTIA’s multistakeholder process on UAS privacy;
- Advising clients on counter-UAS measures, including jamming;
- Drafting legislative language to promote our clients’ business objectives;
- Providing public policy strategic advice regarding potential federal and state UAS legislation;
- Drafting comments on FAA UAS rulemakings;
- Tracking and analyzing FAA UAS policies and news;
- Advising universities on how they can operate UAS in support of their programs;
- Testifying at local zoning hearings;
- Advising insurance clients on using UAS to perform analysis of post-catastrophe situations;
Briefing utility companies on how to avoid risks to human inspectors and obtain authority to use UAS to conduct utility inspections;

Preparing and filing numerous Section 333 Exemption grants for commercial UAS operators in a number of industries including insurance, media, and technology;

Aiding clients in obtaining Certificates of Waiver or Authorization (COAs) to fly UAS;

Advising clients on the FAA’s airworthiness certification processes;

Reviewing Operations Manuals for various UAS and advising manufacturers on how to comply with FAA requirements and policies;

Advising manufacturers on FCC equipment certification requirements; and

Aiding clients in the preparation and filing of FCC experimental license applications for authority to test radio systems for use with UAS.

Through our partnership with SIGNAL Group’s Aviation team, the firm combines its traditional experience in UAS regulatory issues with a deep understanding of the fundamental policy issues driving industry performance and growth. As innovative technologies force convergence of new concepts and ideas, SIGNAL/Wiley Rein is able to provide the services demanded to drive market and regulatory solutions.

Contact Us

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