

FAA REGULATIONS CLEAR WAY FOR DELIVERY DRONES

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The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has finalized its regulations concerning operational drones, allowing retailers to start using drone delivery systems.

In making drones available for retail delivery use, the FAA has carved out a space for drones to operate without becoming an “air carrier” under federal law regulating air transportation.

As a result, drones can now be used to deliver cargo in the mainland United States, except in Washington D.C., or any U.S. territory if the cargo weighs less than a total of 55 pounds, the flight is conducted from the remote pilot’s visual line of sight, the drones fly a maximum speed of 100 mph, and gain a maximum of 400 feet.

The much anticipated drone regulations bode well for retailers and manufacturers making their way into the drone delivery space. Just a couple of months ago, Switzerland's postal service began testing out drone deliveries with [Matternet](#), a company dedicated to creating and mastering drone delivery systems.

In the United States, Amazon has eagerly been preparing for favorable regulations to allow room for Amazon PrimeAir, a delivery system designed to get to customers in 30 minutes or less.

Drones must be flown by remote pilots during daylight hours

Before retailers can start operating delivery drones, the new FAA regulations require that there must be a remote pilot who holds a remote pilot certificate and conducts a pre-flight check before each flight. The drone must remain in the pilot's visual line of sight so that it can be readily seen without binoculars.

Additional regulations require that drones can only be flown 30 minutes prior to sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset (at twilight hours, only with the appropriate anti-collision lighting), and cannot be flown over people not involved with the drone flight. Furthermore, the remote pilot must submit a report to the FAA within 10 days of any serious accident, loss of consciousness, or at least \$500 worth of property damage.

Before any drone is flown, it must be registered under the requirements implemented in December 2015.

The new drone operating regulations may be the first step towards an emerging market for drone delivery systems. The remote pilot qualifications are more relaxed than before, making it easier for individuals to become certified and expand the use of drones. The actual utility of drone delivery systems are limited, however, by the requirement that the drone not leave the remote pilot's visual line of sight.

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