

Illinois Unmanned Aerial System Oversight Task Force Meeting 1



Meeting Information	
Date & Time	January 14, 2016 – 1:30 PM
Location	IDOT – Division of Aeronautics Large Conference Room
Address	1 Langhorne Bond Drive Springfield, IL 62707

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome

Steve Young, Task Force Chair and Interim Director of the IDOT Division of Aeronautics began the meeting by welcoming the Task Force members and going over general housekeeping items.

2. Introductions

Task force member introduced themselves and gave a brief overview of their knowledge, history, and involvement with UAS. Additional attendees also introduced themselves.

3. Task Force Legislation Overview

Legislation was summarized and the specific language regarding the Task Force's Purpose, Scope/Role, Considerations, and Specific Duties.

4. Presentations

Joe Samudovsky, IDOT-Aeronautics Flight Safety Coordinator, gave a presentation that provided an overview of UAS, including what they are, the various types, and the multitude of uses and operator types that exist.

Mark Foisy, FAA UAS Specialist, gave a presentation about the current and proposed Federal regulatory structure for UAS. James Tegtmeyer, FAA Office of the Chief Counsel joined Mr. Foisy towards the end of the call to address any legal questions the Task Force may have had.

Mr. Foisy noted the FAA is actively trying to foster a “culture of safety” and is focusing strongly on education as a primary means to encourage the safe operation of UAS. The FAA is trying to minimize the need for the “Compliance & Enforcement” aspect (letters of correction, suspension of privileges, civil penalties, etc.) by being proactive with their educational campaign.

A discussion took place among the group centered around the potential role authority the State may have to implement UAS regulations. The FAA encouraged the Task Force to carefully consider the FAA's role in airspace matters and to be very mindful of the Federal oversight of the National Airspace System. While there exist some UAS operational restrictions that can be considered at the State/Local levels, the FAA has the sole authority to regulate airspace.

Several Task Force Members noted that determining exactly what types of activities or operational characteristics the State has the authority to address will be a critical factor in this overall effort.

A Task Force Member asked the FAA about the proper methods of addressing someone suspected of operating UAS unsafely or illegally. The Task Force Member noted that it is difficult to be a “beat cop” in the middle of this without firm guidance or protocol – the citizens want immediate action/resolution by the responding officer. The FAA suggested that Local Law Enforcement attempt to handle the issue first, as the FAA is not considered a first responder. Local Law Enforcement should research what laws or local ordinances the operator may have violated (harassment laws, voyeurism laws, endangering the public’s safety, public nuisance, etc.). The FAA should be contacted and informed of the activity after the immediate threat is over for follow-up investigation/action. The FAA also mentioned that they are working towards distribution of informational pamphlets/cards specifically written for Law Enforcement in the field to assist them in responding to calls.

Regarding UAS-specific legislation/restrictions, several Task Force Members encouraged research into what laws might currently exist regarding the type of activity the operator may be engaging in via UAS. The question was raised whether separate UAS-specific laws were needed, or whether a more general consideration should be made that essentially legally defines the UAS an “extension of the operator,” so any illegal activity being performed by the UAS (harassment, voyeurism, property damage, reckless conduct, etc.) would legally be as if the operator was doing it directly. That “extension of your person” concept could then be supplemented by separately addressing things unique to UAS that cannot be tied to existing laws (weaponizing, etc.) Again, any recommendations must take into account the FAA’s regulatory role.

Several comments were made regarding the importance of a comprehensive State-level solution rather than allowing a patchwork of local rules and ordinances. It was noted that with 200+ home rule communities in Illinois, the public should not have to worry about specific rules within each town and the potential of inadvertently violating a little-known local rule.

5. Task Force Goals/Structure

The Task Force Members were asked to review current & proposed federal rulemaking regarding UAS and begin to carefully consider not only what level of oversight is within the authority of this Task Force, but also what is and appropriate level of oversight at the State level.

The proposed structure of the Task Force was presented, including meeting schedule and proposed discussion topics. The Task Force Members were asked to provide feedback and any additional sub-topics they felt were important to consider and discuss.

6. Discussion

Task Force Members were polled and asked to provide their final thoughts and any specific topics they would like addressed in subsequent meetings. A variety of issues were mentioned, representing the multiple viewpoints of the group (manufacturing, commercial, recreational, public-use, law-enforcement, as well as other oversight considerations). Director Young mentioned that these will be useful as the Task Force moves forward and detailed discussion topics are considered.

7. Next Steps

The meeting concluded with a reminder to research federal regulations, look at what other States have done with similar Task Forces, think of ways to improve the overall process, and to submit discussion topics for the next meeting.