

EAA Recommendations on FAA NPRM Remote-ID Comments

February 13, 2020 - EAA is urging members to comment on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on [Remote Identification of Unmanned Aircraft Systems](#) (Docket ID FAA-2019-1100). As [we have previously reported](#), the NPRM contains a broad mandate for UAS to carry remote identification equipment that could cripple traditional model aviation.

While remote ID may be appropriate for some UAS operations in certain circumstances, it has no place in the world of traditional model aviation, which has been safely integrated into the National Airspace System for decades with minimal regulation. There is no reason to subject this community, which serves as a major pathway to aviation for youth and adults, to the burden and hassle of remote ID.

In addition to taking away a key pathway into the world of aviation, a universal remote ID mandate would also provide a precedent for future mandates in manned aviation. It has long been EAA's policy that further UAS integration must not come with any new equipment mandates for manned flight.

Please [comment now](#) using the following guide. The deadline for comments is March 2, 2020.

EAA Commenting Guide for Remote ID NPRM

Please use these talking points to develop your own comments in your own words. Copied and pasted comments have far less impact on the rulemaking process. Please be civil and respectful in your comments.

Begin by writing a brief statement about your connection to model aviation and your concern for the future of the hobby under these proposed rules. For example, you may be a modeler yourself, you may be concerned about the loss of a pathway for youth into aviation, or you may simply be concerned about this rule threatening a fellow community of aviation enthusiasts.

Next, state your belief that the rule should not apply to traditional model aircraft (we'll use the abbreviation "TMA" in this guide). EAA proposes defining traditional model aircraft as the following:

*Traditional Model Aircraft: small unmanned aircraft systems that are not capable of navigating beyond the visual line of sight of the operator through advanced flight systems and technology.**

(We are using this definition because it matches language Congress used in the 2018 FAA Reauthorization Act to allow exemptions for traditional models from certain UAS design standards.)

EAA suggests commenting on the following points. These are *your* comments, so feel free to express any other concerns you have as well.

False Assumption of Risk: TMAs do not fit the risk profile that the FAA cites in requiring remote ID for UAS. TMAs have been operated for generations with minimal regulation. At a point in time when the FAA is considering how to *safely integrate* UAS into the National Airspace System (NAS), TMAs already are a model of safe integration.

TMAs, by our definition above, are incapable of operating beyond visual line of sight, substantially limiting the amount of risk they pose to other users of the NAS and the public. They also require skill

and mentorship to operate, which limits their use by individuals who are careless or ignorant to the rules.

Limited Remote ID: The NPRM proposes that UAS that lack onboard remote ID must have onboard flight control equipment that keeps the UAS within 400 feet of the operator (commonly called "geofencing" technology), and the operator must broadcast where they are to the FAA. This is inappropriate for TMAs, which are difficult to retrofit with this sort of equipment and frequently fly from appropriately sized open spaces (such as public parks, athletic fields, or private property).

We recommend that you instead propose that TMAs be exempt from the geofencing requirement of limited remote ID, as the inability to stay under control beyond line of sight is self-limiting. Users should only need to notify the FAA when and where they are flying, either on-site or beforehand, using a simple website or app. The majority of approvals could be issued automatically by the system, minimizing the workload requirements on the FAA. This is similar to the Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC) system already used by the FAA for approving UAS flights in certain areas.

We also recommend removing the requirement that a TMA stay within 400 feet of the operator. Instead we propose a 400-foot ceiling (unless otherwise authorized) and within visual line of sight. A 400-foot "bubble" around the operator is severely limiting for models, especially fixed-wing.

FRIAs: The FAA proposes allowing flying without remote ID only at FAA recognized identification areas (FRIAs), and only for models that are amateur-built (using a standard similar to the 51 percent rule for amateur-built full-size aircraft). Community-based organizations (CBOs) will apply to establish FRIAs within a one-time 12-calendar-month window after the publication of the final rule and will be reevaluated on a periodic basis. The FAA states that they expect FRIAs to eventually be obsolete once remote ID on UAS becomes more common. This demonstrates a fundamental lack of understanding of model aviation.

We propose the following alternative:

FRIAs should be able to be established at any time in the future. The locations of flying sites change often, and new clubs are created. Additionally, modelers who frequently fly on their own land may want to establish their own FRIAs.

FRIAs should exist into perpetuity, with no renewal requirement, unless terminated for cause by the FAA or canceled by the owner (similar to a pilot or airworthiness certificate). Temporary FRIAs should be available for special events, such as a model aviation day at an airport or a seaplane RC event at a lake.

Any TMA should be able to be flown at a FRIA, and there should be no amateur-built requirement nor a phase-out of factory-built TMAs lacking remote ID equipment. Equipment requirements should be based on capability of a UAS, not the manner of construction.

FRIAs should be operated under the safety guidelines of a CBO, but there should be an option to establish one directly through the FAA, using a simple website or app with mostly automated approval (again, similar to the LAANC example cited above). The current proposal is to work through a CBO to establish a FRIA, which may be inappropriate for some private operators.

Registration: The NPRM proposes to require every modeler to register every active model uniquely. Presently they are only required to register once, and this registration covers all aircraft. A prolific modeler could have more than 100 models with a constantly changing collection, imposing a massive financial burden and hassle factor. Urge the FAA to only require registration once per operator as is presently required. If the FAA wishes to know how many models a person owns, they can ask this upon renewal.

Privacy: Even with our proposed changes, modelers will still send a significant amount of information to the FAA, including real-time location information in some cases. There must be the ability to opt out of being included in publicly accessible data. The FAA and law enforcement will have the information they need, which meets the intent of this rule.

*EAA recognizes that our proposed definition of traditional model aircraft does not include first-person-view (FPV) modeling, which is an exciting new part of the hobby. While the recommendations above would allow the vast majority of model aviation to continue with minimal disruption, EAA will be addressing possible solutions for FPV in its own comments to the docket.