



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

Memorandum

To: Assistant Secretaries
Bureau Heads

From: Lisa Branum
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services

Subject: UAS Flights for Emergency Operations and Training: Amended Guidance under Secretary's Order 3379

Secretary's Order 3379 (SO 3379) temporarily grounded the Department of the Interior's (DOI) fleet of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) with the exception of flights for emergency operations and training. Under that Order, and the Implementation Guidance issued on January 31, 2020, all UAS operators were previously instructed to submit Emergency Operation Reporting Forms and Emergency Readiness Waiver Forms to uas@ios.doi.gov for review and approval by DOI's UAS Advisory Board. This Amended Guidance changes those procedures, streamlining the process to be followed in the event that DOI UAS are needed for emergency purposes.

Effective immediately, if there is a need to use a DOI UAS for an Emergency Operation or Emergency Readiness, the operator shall *only* report these flight(s) via the DOI Office of Aviation Services [OAS-2U reporting form](#) within five (5) working days of the flight(s), and ***will no longer submit*** a UAS Reporting or Waiver form to uas@ios.doi.gov for review or approval.

Examples of "Emergency Operation" and "Emergency Readiness" UAS flights that no longer require the submittal of any type of form to uas@ios.doi.gov are below:

- i. *Emergency Operation*: Flights made in connection with or in anticipation of fighting an existing or imminent wildland fire; preventing a wildland fire, such as fuels management projects and prescribed fire treatments; monitoring for or responding to a potential/declared national, state, or local emergency involving human safety; preventing imminent damage to human life, infrastructure, and/or property; conducting a human search and rescue effort; and flights required to characterize susceptibility to or impacts from natural hazards, such as floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, coastal erosion, hurricanes, or earthquakes.

- ii. *Emergency Readiness*: Flights for proficiency training related to emergency operations, including DOI Remote Pilot currency training required under OPM-11 and/or training associated with acquiring or maintaining qualifications outlined in National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) guides, standards, and position task books. Equipment, sensor, and data processing technique readiness and training are included.

All other flights outside the scope as provided above remain subject to SO 3379's temporary grounding order at this time.

If you are unsure whether a flight falls within the scope of an Emergency Operation or Emergency Readiness, please contact uas@ios.doi.gov for further clarity.

cc: Mark Bathrick, Director, Office of Aviation Services, Office of the Secretary