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New FAA Requirements for Drone Owners

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This week, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released an updated interim rule in the Federal Register which requires drone owners to display their FAA-issued registration number on the external surface of the drone. Owners and operators may no longer place or write registration numbers in an interior compartment. However, the final rule does not change the acceptable methods of external marking and it does not specify which external surface on which the registration number must be placed.

When the FAA first required registration of drones, the FAA required that the registration marking be readily accessible and maintained in a readable condition. At that time, there was some flexibility. However, subsequently, law enforcement officials and FAA's interagency security partners have expressed concerns about the risk to first responders of a concealed explosive device in a drone's compartment if they were required to open a compartment to obtain the registration number and identify the owner.

This rule becomes effective next week on February 23, 2019; however, there is a 30-day comment period which will end on March 15, 2019.

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