



# Interagency Aviation Information Bulletin



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**Subject:** Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Operations within Incident Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs)

**Area of Concern:** Special Government Interest (SGI) waivers required for all UAS operations in a TFR

**Distribution:** All Aviation Managers, Air Operations Branch Directors, and Dispatch Centers

**Discussion:** The primary mission of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is to maintain the safety and efficiency of the shared National Airspace System (NAS). The rules put in place to ensure this safety, apply to both crewed and uncrewed (UAS) aircraft. In our agencies, we are familiar with situations that require a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) to limit aircraft operating in the vicinity of a fire, natural disaster, or special event. That said, not all agency, cooperator, or non-agency operators may be aware of the procedures to legally operate a UAS in a TFR. The information below outlines the process.



A Special Government Interest (SGI) waiver is required for **all** UAS to fly within an incident TFR, regardless of agency or mission. The SGI process is managed by the FAA to accommodate real-time application requests that will directly support a UAS operation benefiting a critical public good and addressing urgent circumstances. First responders and other organizations responding to natural disasters or other emergency situations may be eligible for expedited approval through the SGI process as outlined in [FAA Order JO 7200.23B Processing UAS Requests.pdf](#).

To apply for a waiver through the SGI process you must be a current Part 107 Remote Pilot, or you must have an existing Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA).

Agency UAS are required to obtain a SGI and follow guidelines outlined in the [NWCG Standards for Fire Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations, PMS 515](#).

As UAS operations continue to increase, other operators outside of typical fire agencies (USFS or DOI), such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), may request a SGI and the permission to operate in the TFR. Local law enforcement, state fire agencies, and even utility companies or insurance companies may have a compelling reason to operate within a TFR.

All Federal Fire Agency UAS pilots operating in a TFR must be properly trained and carded for incident operations. In some cases, immediate threats to life and property warrant non-agency, state, or local partners to assist with UAS operations within a TFR without the use of a cooperator letter. In these cases, the UAS pilots may not be properly trained to operate in the Fire Traffic Area. Diligent effort by the AOB and/or the ATGS to establish coordination, communication protocols, separation, and deconfliction with other participating aircraft is essential for safe UAS operations within a TFR.

Recommendations:

- Do not allow UAS to fly within an incident TFR without a SGI.
- Send Requestor to: [Emergency Situations | Federal Aviation Administration \(faa.gov\)](https://www.faa.gov/emergency-situations) to follow instructions for the requirement to obtain a SGI.
- Verify that the requestor has a SGI prior to coordinating entry into an incident TFR.
- All UAS operations within an incident TFR should notify the dispatch center, helibase, AOBD, and/or ATGS for proper coordination for entry into the TFR.

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