

Policy for UAS Operations on UNOLS Vessels (July 2016)

With the recent publication of the FAA small UAS rule, a policy for UNOLS ships has become necessary. Effective immediately, operation of Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS), or drones, from or over UNOLS ships may not take place without demonstrated compliance with national or international regulations (ICSA, FAA) and specific approval of the ship's captain or designee, as a minimum. This applies to crew, techs and members of the science party, and refers to all operations, whether recreational, educational, or professional. Obtaining national approvals, such as FAA's Sec 333 exemption or Certificate of Authority or Waiver (COA), as well as pilot qualifications, are not a guarantee the operations will be approved by the ship's captain. Recreational or hobbyist freedom of use over land is not available at sea, so the importance of contacting the ship's operator ahead of time is critical. Detailed policies and processes are in development by SCOAR to provide guidance and training.