



Chapter 736 Newsletter for March 2018

Flight Service Transitions to Leidos Pilot Web Portal

The FAA will discontinue the Direct User Access Terminal Service (DUATS II) Program, effective May 16, 2018. Internet services, including access to weather and aeronautical information, flight plan filing and automated services will remain available at no charge to pilots at www.1800wxbrief.com.

To continue to receive free services, users are encouraged to register with www.1800wxbrief.com. The FAA will work with current DUATS II providers on transition activities, including conducting pilot outreach, establishing commercial interfaces, and providing user migration assistance.

Please contact FAA Flight Service at our customer feedback website if you have any questions.

https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ato/service_units/systemops/fs/contact_us/

Congress Mulling Another Short-term FAA Extension

With the issue of air traffic control reform settled for the moment, House and Senate leaders are now looking toward a short-term extension of FAA authorization while they hash out their differences on a long-term comprehensive aviation bill. The FAA's authorization currently is set to expire at the end of the month under a stop-gap bill the House and Senate approved in late September.

Long-term comprehensive FAA reauthorization legislation had been stalled over controversies surrounding the independent ATC measure in the House bill and a provision over ATP requirements in the Senate bill. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (T&I) chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pennsylvania) took the aviation community by surprise several weeks ago when he agreed to shelve the independent ATC measure in an effort to move a long-term FAA bill. Senate Commerce Committee chairman John Thune (R-South Dakota) has long indicated a willingness to back off the ATP requirements.

But with little time now left before the FAA's authorization is set to expire, leaders recognize that an extension is necessary. They are currently assessing whether to pass the extension as a separate bill or include it in an omnibus federal spending bill that is set to

come under consideration in the next few days. Congress is facing a March 23 deadline to pass the spending bill.

The length of an FAA extension is still unclear, but a four-month period has been raised as a possibility, providing time to pass a long-term reauthorization bill before the August break. House T&I Committee staff said that once the extension is passed, “The chairman [Shuster] will then work with House and Senate colleagues to pass a long-term bill in the coming weeks.”

Aside from the ATC measure, the House and Senate versions of comprehensive FAA reauthorization have numerous provisions of interest to the aviation industry, touching upon certification reforms, the future of supersonic travel, the incorporation of unmanned aircraft into the National Airspace System, and protection of the U.S. aircraft registry from future potential government shutdowns.

Hard to believe

Amazon is issued patent for delivery drones that can react to screaming voices, flailing arms

Amazon.com has been granted a new patent by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for a delivery drone that can respond to human gestures.

The concept is part of Amazon's goal to develop a fleet of unmanned aerial vehicles that can get packages to customers in 30 minutes or less. Issued earlier this week, the patent may help Amazon grapple with how flying robots might interact with human bystanders and customers waiting on their doorsteps.

Depending on a person's gestures — a welcoming thumbs up, shouting or frantic arm waving — the drone can adjust its behavior, according to the patent. The machine could release the package it's carrying, alter its flight path to avoid crashing, ask humans a question or abort the delivery, the patent says.

Among several illustrations in the design, a person is shown outside his home, flapping his arms in what Amazon describes as an “unwelcoming manner,” to show an example of someone shooing away a drone flying overhead. A voice bubble comes out of the man's mouth, depicting possible voice commands to the incoming machine.

“The human recipient and/or the other humans can communicate with the vehicle using human gestures to aid the vehicle along its path to the delivery location,” the patent states.

Another diagram depicts the steps a drone will take when reading human body language as it delivers packages. “Receive Human Gesture”; “Access Gesture Database”; “Determine Human Gesture Based on Gesture Database”; “Proceed in Accordance With Determined Human Gesture and Delivery Instructions.”

According to the patent, the drone's communication system would include an array of sensors, including a depth sensor and cameras to detect visible, infrared and ultraviolet light. The drones would be able to recognize hand and body gestures, human voices and movement, such as a person walking closer to the drone or away from it.

If the drones are cleared to deliver, they can release boxes with extra padding from the air or they can land and then offer the parcels, the patent says.

Since announcing its plans to develop an air delivery service, Amazon has applied for several ambitious patents that include the use of [giant airships](#) to serve as mobile flying warehouses and designs for drones that [self-destruct](#) during an emergency.

There's no word on when the gesture-recognition system might debut. Amazon declined to comment. In 2016, the company made its first autonomous [drone delivery](#) to a shopper in the United Kingdom. A private customer trial for drone delivery in Britain is ongoing.

Flight Plan Changes in Effect for DC FRZ

Effective Thursday, March 29, 2018 at 0401z, the FAA will transfer responsibility for filing flight plans in the Washington DC Flight Restricted Zone (FRZ) from Flight Service to the Flight Data Unit (FDU) located at the Washington Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZDC). Pilots will call 703-771-3476 to file FRZ flight plans and identify themselves using their assigned waiver number and/or confidential pilot identification number. This includes all flights in/out of the FRZ, Maryland Three Program (MD3) airports, and the general aviation operations to/from DCA (DASSP Program).

In addition, all pilots flying under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) within 60 nm of the DCA VOR/DME must complete special awareness training for the Washington DC Metropolitan Area. Please visit the FAA Safety [website](#) to learn more about requirements for flying in the DC FRZ.

<https://www.faa.gov/gslac/ALC/CourseLanding.aspx?cID=405>

Unless specifically authorized by TSA all flight operations are prohibited within the DC FRZ.

Flight plans are not accepted from the air or online. The pilot is required to continuously squawk their ATC-assigned transponder code and maintain two-way radio communication with ATC while operating in the DC FRZ. An operational Mode C transponder is required.

Flying IFR into any airport within the FRZ, the pilot must call the ZDC FDU prior to departure to file their IFR flight plan. If flying IFR out of a FRZ airport, the pilot must also call the ZDC FDU to file the IFR flight plan. Only the ZDC FDU can file an IFR flight plan to/from a FRZ airport. A pilot may call Leidos Flight Service separately for weather or NOTAM information.

If flying VFR into or out of a FRZ airport, the pilot must call the ZDC FDU to file the DC FRZ flight plan prior to departure. Separately, if a pilot desires to file an optional

VFR flight plan with Flight Service, they must call Leidos Flight Service. A pilot may also choose to call Leidos Flight Service for weather or NOTAM information.

Please contact FAA Flight Service at our customer feedback [website](#) if you have any questions.

https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ato/service_units/systemops/fs/res_links/flight_service_feedback/