



FAA AUTOMATES DRONE AIRSPACE APPROVALS IN DC REGION

Dulles Airport Now Eligible for Expedited Low Altitude Flight Authorizations

WASHINGTON, DC (3/24/2020) – The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently announced an important expansion of the Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC), which automates the application and approval process for commercial drone operators to obtain airspace authorizations.

Two area airports, Dulles International Airport (IAD) and Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI), joined the list of approximately 400 air traffic facilities where LAANC is currently available.

LAANC, a collaboration between the FAA and the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) industry, directly supports the safe integration of UAS into the nation's airspace and expedites the time it takes for drone pilots to receive a flight authorization when operating below 400 feet within controlled airspace. The service is accessible to all FAA certified commercial pilots who operate under the FAA's drone rule (Part 107).

"Our customers understand the true power of drones and have started to incorporate this exciting new technology into their business operations," said Michael Wright, the owner of DC Drones. "The previous system for obtaining an airspace authorization from the FAA in the DC region was a lengthy and cumbersome process," said Wright, who is also an FAA certified commercial drone pilot. "The recent expansion of the LAANC system is an absolute game changer for us and our clients."

The airspace around the District of Columbia is more restricted than in any other part of the country. The region is governed by a Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA), established after 9/11, that specifies restricted areas where flying an unmanned aircraft without FAA authorization is prohibited. Violators of these rules face stiff fines and criminal penalties.

To date, there have been more than 170,000 approved authorizations through the LAANC system in the United States.

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