FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Memorandum

To: EPA Funded PIs

From: Roberto M. Gutierrez
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Office of Research and Economic Development

Subj.: EPA and FIU Requirements for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones)

Date: October 9, 2026

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued new requirements restricting the purchase, operation, and use of certain unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), commonly referred to as drones, under EPA assistance agreements. The Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) is providing this memorandum to help faculty, staff, and administrators understand the EPA requirements and the related Florida International University approval process.

EPA Prohibition on FASC-Prohibited Unmanned Aircraft Systems

On October 1, 2026, EPA issued RAIN-2027-G01, implementing the American Security Drone Act of 2023 and related federal guidance. Effective December 22, 2025, EPA recipients and subrecipients may not use EPA financial assistance for the purchase, operation, or use of UAS prohibited by the Federal Acquisition Security Council (FASC). The prohibition also applies to previously purchased FASC-prohibited equipment used in connection with an EPA-funded award.

Prohibited UAS are systems manufactured or assembled by a covered foreign entity that presents a security risk. EPA incorporated this requirement into its Fiscal Year 2027 General Terms and Conditions as Term and Condition #7.

Required Screening and Documentation

Before purchasing or operating a drone on an EPA-funded project, recipients and subrecipients must:

- Review the FASC Covered Foreign Entity List published in the System for Award Management See FASC Covered Foreign Entity List.
- Search the UAS manufacturer by name through the Consolidated Screening List referenced by the FASC list See Consolidated Screening List.
- Do not use federal funds to purchase the UAS, and do not use the equipment on the project, if the manufacturer appears on the applicable list.
- Maintain a record of the screening in the award file.

The award-file record must include:

- The date the Consolidated Screening List was searched;
- The UAS manufacturer and model checked; and
- The overall search result indicating whether the equipment to be purchased or operated is prohibited.

Subrecipient Requirements

EPA states that pass-through entities receiving EPA funds are responsible for communicating this requirement to their subrecipients, including borrowers under EPA-funded revolving loan programs. ORED will communicate the requirement to applicable FIU subrecipients. Principal Investigators and project administrators should alert ORED if a subrecipient currently uses, or plans to purchase or operate, a drone in connection with an EPA-funded project.

FIU Drone Policy and Prior Written Authorization

FIU Interim Policy #500.001, Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems/Drones at Florida International University, requires prior written University authorization for any purchase, acquisition, or use of a drone, drone-related service, or drone-related equipment by University personnel for University business, regardless of location. Prior written authorization is also required for any drone operation on or within University property, including inside University buildings.

FIU personnel are prohibited from purchasing, acquiring, or using drones or related services or equipment produced by a manufacturer domiciled in, owned by, or controlled in whole or in part by a Foreign Country of Concern, except for very limited research-related exceptions that must be approved in advance.

The FIU Drone Assessment Team, comprised of representatives from the Office of Compliance, Office of General Counsel, Division of Information Technology, and ORED, is responsible for assessing requested purchases, acquisitions, and uses and for determining whether written authorization may be issued. Authorized operations must comply with applicable federal, state, and local requirements, including FAA regulations and applicable University policies.

ACTION REQUIRED

If an EPA-funded project currently uses drones, plans to purchase or acquire drones or drone-related services or equipment, or anticipates drone operations during the project period, contact the FIU Drone Assessment Team before proceeding. Written authorization must be obtained by emailing drones@fiu.edu.

Additional Resources and Contacts

- EPA RAIN-2027-G01
- EPA General Terms and Conditions effective October 1, 2026 or later
- FASC Covered Foreign Entity List
- Consolidated Screening List
- FIU Drone Assessment Team

Questions about EPA award applicability or documentation should be directed to the EPA Project Officer and Grants Specialist identified in the applicable award document. Questions about FIU drone purchases, acquisitions, or operations should be directed to the FIU Drone Assessment Team at drones@fiu.edu.