

# Unmanned Aircraft Systems & Autonomous Vehicles

The Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Autonomous Vehicles (UAS) practice at Stinson provides comprehensive guidance and legal services to commercial and governmental clients interested in incorporating autonomous technology into their operations or protecting their facilities from unwanted UAS interference.

With clients in energy, agriculture, transportation, construction, manufacturing, real estate, mining, sports, film/photography, insurance, media and emergency services, our team has been on the cutting edge of most, if not all, of the emerging issues involving UAS technology. Our attorneys have been advising and representing clients before the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and have been actively working with federal and state legislatures to draft laws that both stimulate industry growth and ensure safety and the protection of privacy.

Our full-service legal counsel includes educating entities on the implications of evolving regulations, advising clients on the proper authorizations and approvals for their intended UAS use, preparing and reviewing contracts and policies that are impacted by UAS use and working with the client to establish internal operating policies, processes and procedures, including best practices to promote a culture of compliance.

In addition, our attorneys have guided UAS owners and operators through FAA regulatory filings and proceedings and have provided representation on complex cybersecurity, privacy, intellectual property and transactional issues.

## CAPABILITIES

### Government Regulation

In August 2016, the FAA enacted Part 107 rules governing the commercial use of small UAS aircraft that weigh less than 55 pounds. While Part 107 rules are generally easier to implement and provide more flexibility than the prior regulations, unique circumstances and intended uses of UAS technology may warrant the need for a Part 107 waiver, an experimental or type certificate or a certificate of waiver or authorization exemption under Sections 333 or 334. Although the FAA rules are extensive, our attorneys have the experience and knowledge to help clients sort through them.

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## Insurance

Accidents happen, and an accident involving a UAS has the potential to cause serious injuries or property damage. At a minimum, owners and operators will want to ensure their insurance policies include personal injury coverage, property damage coverage, invasion of privacy torts coverage and workers' compensation coverage for claims arising out of UAS operations. Our insurance attorneys can help clients determine the right insurance coverage, advise on the scope of existing coverage and how to maximize coverage, assist in filing claims after an accident, and, in the event the insurer denies coverage, fight the insurer's denial on our client's behalf.

## Intellectual Property Rights

New technology and new applications of old technology are driving the development of the UAS industry. Our attorneys can help clients identify and protect intellectual property related to UAS. We have years of experience prosecuting patents, registering copyrights, trademarks and domain names, and securing trade secret protection as well as enforcing intellectual property rights before administrative agencies and in courtrooms across the country.

## Privacy Concerns

Many states have considered legislation that would restrict the use of UAS in the name of protecting privacy rights and private property. In addition, current laws could expose a business to liability for violating privacy rights using UAS. Our attorneys help owners and operators reduce their risk without hindering the full economic potential of unmanned aircrafts.

## Contract/Employment

Like any business, UAS owners, operators and third-party service providers have contract and employment issues. We advise clients on a wide variety of labor, employment and employee benefits matters and represent clients in disputes before federal and state courts and before administrative agencies. We assist in developing sensible employment policies, negotiating employment contracts, managing sensitive workplace investigations and guiding clients through emergency personnel situations.

## Regulatory Compliance/Training

Our attorneys routinely provide comprehensive in-house regulatory training programs to educate UAS operators, business units, managers and legal teams on the current state of the law. These programs serve as a vital step in creating a corporate culture of compliance. While such programs are designed to ensure that a company and its employees remain in compliance, the added benefit of such programs is that when violations occur, agencies can rely on such programs as evidence of management's commitment to compliance. The absence of such a program is oftentimes a key factor in assessing corporate responsibility

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for violations.

**CONTACT:** Stephen Schemenauer | 612.335.1891 | [steve.schemenauer@stinson.com](mailto:steve.schemenauer@stinson.com)

## TEAM

David D. Axtell

Stephen J. Cosentino, CIPP

Timothy J. Feathers

David F. Rifkind

Stephen Schemenauer

## RELATED CAPABILITIES

Cybersecurity & Data Privacy

Energy

Railroads

Construction

Renewable Energy

Labor, Employment & Benefits

Intellectual Property & Technology

## NEWS

University of Missouri Inducts David Kim into 2024 ISE Hall of Fame

11.20.2024

## PUBLICATIONS

Trump's First 100 Days: Transportation

12.09.2024

Now is Your Chance to be Heard on the FCC's New Proposed Drone Regulations

02.03.2023

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