



## FCC Blocks Popular Drones and Components from Sale and Import in the U.S.

Effective December 23, 2025, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (“UAS”) and UAS components manufactured abroad have been added to the FCC’s list of equipment and services covered by Section 2 of the Secure Networks Act. As a result, these foreign drones and their components are effectively banned from future importation and sale in the United States.

Stemming from the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (“NDAA”), the ban is intended to have the dual effect of on the one hand, enhancing national security by securing data privacy, limiting opportunities for foreign espionage and reducing reliance on foreign technology, while on the other hand, kickstarting the U.S. drone industry by excluding drones of foreign manufacture from the domestic market place. However, the new restrictions are likely to have a severe impact on U.S. drone pilots who operate drones for commercial, industrial and recreational purposes.

This is big news with major consequences since DJI, the Chinese manufacturer of arguably the world’s most popular and dominant drones, with a massive 80% market share, is subject to the new FCC restrictions. Accordingly, as of the effective date, no new DJI products will be authorized for sale within the United States until further review. Furthermore, all future imports of newly released DJI drones will be blocked from importation. While it is true that the restrictions do not prevent the sale of existing stateside retailer stock, or operation and use of currently available models, the importation and retail ban on additional stock and future models is sure to exhaust available supply of UAS and replacement parts and components in time.

It is important to note that the ban only impacts on the importation and sale of newly manufactured drones and parts. Accordingly, the following list of some of the most prolific DJI drones remain approved for sale within the U.S. and therefore are still legal for market, retail and operation:

- DJI Mini series, including the DJI Mini 4 Pro, DJI Mini 3 Pro, DJI Mini 3, DJI Mini 3E and DJI Mini 2E
- DJI Air Series, including the DJI Air 3 and DJI Air 2E
- DJI Mavic Series, including the Mavic 3 Pro, Mavic 3 Classic and Mavic 3
- DJI Avata Series, including the Avata 2 and Avata FPV
- DJI Phantom and Inspire Series, including the Phantom 4 Pro and Inspire 3

Accordingly, existing stock of these models in the United States may still be sold, and of course, flown within the United States. These drones will not stop working and recreational and commercial flights remain legal under the current regulations. Furthermore, there has been no change to the existing registration, remote ID and other operational FAA guidelines.

### **Key Take-Aways**

As a forward-looking restriction, those who already own a DJI or other foreign manufactured drone, can continue to operate under existing guidelines and registration rules of the FAA. Existing devices will not be disabled or grounded at present. Retailers can continue to sell existing stock of models previously approved by the FCC. As inventory is depleted, however, availability is likely to decrease. New models and unreleased products, as well as major components will not receive the necessary FCC authorization for import and sale in the U.S. As such, these items will be blocked from the domestic market until cleared by the appropriate national security agencies.

The ramifications of the new restrictions are likely to be far ranging and will impact not only recreational and commercial users, but a whole host of other users, as well, including but not limited to, public safety and emergency services, SAR teams, fire departments, infrastructure agencies and the agricultural industry. Fleet continuity and growth will be heavily effected and with no new drones entering the U.S. market, operators must prepare to conduct flights with constrained fleets while planning for the use of mixed platforms and long-term replacement cycles. While it is possible for the ban to be lifted, this will require action at the federal level, including legislation, regulatory amendments or security reviews contemplated by the NDAA.

### **About the Author:**

Craig H. Handler is an experienced attorney dedicating much of his practice to working with construction industry professionals and property owners in contract drafting and negotiation and in disputes related to defective construction, delay, scope of work, mechanic's lien foreclosure and defense, OSHA violations, ECB violations, and Labor Law claims. Mr. Handler's prior experience working with the insurance industry has afforded him a broad understanding of the complex insurance coverage and indemnity issues that regularly impact the construction industry. Mr. Handler routinely applies this expertise to his practice in order to help his clients cut costs, limit exposure and avoid the many risks associated with this fast-paced industry.

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