# Safety Message

February 2020—Firmware and FAA RID NPRM

As February greets us many have chosen to set their hobby interests aside, or at least limit their participation to inside for the past couple months. The winter build is a time-honored tradition in the northern climates. In addition to getting new aircraft ready for when the weather warms and the winds calm it's the perfect time to give our existing airframes a thorough examination for signs of wear, or potential failure. It's also a good time to check to see if our transmitters, receivers, or ESC's may have pending firmware updates.

The advantage of firmware updates is they often give new capabilities for your existing hardware, or fix previously unknown defects. However, sometimes as new features are introduced or patched another feature may be inadvertently broken by the update. **The availability of an update does not mean it's necessary for your use**. As an example, when Futaba released update 7 for the Futaba14SG they inadvertently introduced a range check failure on startup. Futaba recently introduced update 9 to fix the range check failure on startup issue. Firmware updates tend to be an iterative process with customers being the final test of functionality. FrSky recently released a new firmware for ALL of their D16 ACCST transmitters and receivers back to 2013 (OpenTX as well as FrOS). The firmware addresses a serious issue – if you're in the European Union. The FCC (American) version of transmitters/receivers are not significantly affected, especially if operated where the airwaves are not crowded with many 2.4ghz signals. One takeaway from this is noting that when applying radio firmware updates be sure to note that you have downloaded FCC version and not EU. I recommend waiting on the FrSky ACCST updates for a couple months as this is a major update and there will inevitably be bugs. I'd rather do the updates one time since this transmitter update also requires that all receivers are updated.

**In summary;** when checking over all the clevises, horns, pushrods, screws, motor mounts etc, don't forget to check where you stand regarding what you can't see – the firmware. Additionally, be judicious about applying a recently introduced firmware especially if it's a major update. Finally, be sure you're using the FCC radio firmware and not the EU version.

## Firmware Links

Futaba Software Download

FrSky Important Update for ACCST D16

FrSky Firmware Downloads

Spektrum Firmware Updates

Jeti Firmware Updates

Graupner Updates

Castlelink Update

Personal safety is not the only topic to discuss this month. The survival of our hobby is very much threatened by the recent FAA RID Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). The FAA published their plan requiring broadcast from all aircraft weighing over 250 grams (0.55 pounds) on Dec 31.

Don't be misled by the term "drone" in the NPRM. The FAA uses the term "drone" to apply to all Unmanned Aircraft Systems(UAS), this includes everything we fly at TCRCM field and may even include free flight and control line. This NPRM is open for public comment until March 2. The AMA, and EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association) as well as others petitioned in vain for an extension to the comment period. In response to the request for an extention FAA replied on January 28:

"…the need for remote identification of UAS increasingly has become important as new public safety and **national security concerns** arise regarding the use of UAS. Accordingly, the FAA has determined that any extension of the comment period, and the subsequent delays in promulgation of a final rule implementing remote identification of UAS, would not be consistent with the safety and security objectives of the proposed rule.

Therefore, **your request** to extend the comment period for the Remote Identification of Unmaimed Aircraft Systems NPRM **is denied**. The comment period for the NPRM closes on Monday, March 2, 2020."

Once one dives into the 319 page NPRM in depth it details how the FAA is proposing to progressively annihilate the hobby. This NPRM proposes to make it illegal for a land owner to fly over their own land in the short term, and eventually eliminate model flying fields for home-built aircraft like we now fly. There are many many levels of concern. Grouping Line of Sight (LOS) modeling in with the regulations of Beyond Visual Line of sight BVLOS operations is a one size fits all solution that is inappropriate. Making it impossible to establish new flying fields, or even move an existing club flying field to a new location is well beyond what Congress mandated in the FAA reauthorization act of 2018.

To assist with digesting the information about the NRPM, Jim Andersan has posted a page of information on the **Club Website**. There are also links to two summaries of the NPRM in the sources below.

It's seriously imperative that all interested reach out to the FAA and to all elected representatives. Even if your position is that you have no intention of following these rules then politely tell the FAA that they can expect noncompliance from otherwise law abiding citizens.

Some would say that contacting FAA or representative will make no difference. If that's the case we're no worse off and you did what you could. Your comments MAY make a difference in which case it's time and energy well spent.

## Links to Contacts:

- Dan Newhouse
- Patty Murray
- Maria Cantwell
- White House
- FAA RID NPRM Comment page


## Links to Information and resources.

- Layman's Guide to the NPRM for Remote ID
- AMA summary of the RID NPRM
- AMA Templates to use to assist in drafting your own response.
- Our club website