

## Revised Article

Target Audience: Local Government Officials

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“Did you know unmanned aircraft system (UAS) or drone operators and their vehicles are governed by Federal regulations? Most of us do. However, did you also know about the *Unmanned Aircraft Systems Research, Development, Regulation, and Privacy Act of 2015* (the Act)? The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Aviation Administration (MDOT MAA) reminds every local jurisdiction of the Act and its importance. This Act is codified in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Economic Development Article (EC) § 14–301, *et seq.* The Act not only recognizes the importance of the emerging technology of drones to our everyday lives but also recognizes the importance of having uniformity across the State to support not only the recreational drone activity but also the commercial drone activity. Under EC § 14-301(b), “[o]nly the State may enact a law or take any other action to prohibit, restrict, or regulate the testing or operation of unmanned aircraft systems in the State.” The Act “preempts the authority of a county or municipality to prohibit, restrict, or regulate the testing or operation of unmanned aircraft systems” and “supersedes any existing law or ordinance of a county or municipality that prohibits, restricts, or regulates the testing of operation of unmanned aircraft systems.” See Annotated Code of Maryland, EC § 14-301(c).

To assist with uniformity, the Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) has created a [Public Safety and Law Enforcement Toolkit](#) on its webpage to assist local law enforcement and public safety entities when responding to drone incidents or unauthorized operations. This *Toolkit* includes many FAA publications for local law enforcement and public safety entities to refer to when addressing drone issues. For example, the *Toolkit* includes a [Law Enforcement Pocket Card](#) that makes suggestions on how local law enforcement officers and public safety entities could handle drone incidents. MDOT MAA recommends that this *Pocket Card* be readily available to local law enforcement and public safety entities for reference. The FAA’s *Toolkit* also includes the [Public Safety Small Drone Playbook](#) which highlights key relations and responsibilities between Federal and State/Local authorities.

MDOT MAA welcomes your feedback so please share your thoughts, concerns, or suggestions on how the State and local governments may work collaboratively to safely advance drone activity while balancing local community interests. MDOT MAA’s point of contact on

UAS matters is Mr. Ashish J. Solanki, A.A.E, Director Office of Regional Aviation Assistance.  
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