

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017**

**SESSION LAW 2017-160  
HOUSE BILL 337**

AN ACT TO MAKE VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE LAWS GOVERNING THE USE OF  
UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**MODEL AIRCRAFTS/REMOVE EXEMPTION FROM UNMANNED AIRCRAFT  
SYSTEMS LAWS**

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 15A-300.1(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply to this Article:

...

(2) ~~Model aircraft. — An aircraft, as defined in G.S. 63-1, that is mechanically driven or launched into flight and that meets all of the following requirements:~~

a. ~~Is flown solely for hobby or recreational purposes.~~

b. ~~Is not used for payment, consideration, gratuity, or benefit, directly or indirectly charged, demanded, received, or collected, by any person for the use of the aircraft or any photographic or video image produced by the aircraft.~~

(3) Unmanned aircraft. – An aircraft, as defined in G.S. 63-1, that is operated without the possibility of human intervention from within or on the aircraft and that does not meet the definition of model aircraft.

...."

**REMOVE RESTRICTION ON USE OF SPECIAL IMAGING TECHNOLOGY**

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 15A-300.1(d) is repealed.

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EXCEPTION**

**SECTION 3.** G.S. 15A-300.1 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(c1) Emergency Management Exception. – Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, an emergency management agency, as defined in G.S. 166A-19.3, may use unmanned aircraft systems for all functions and activities related to emergency management, including incident command, area reconnaissance, search and rescue, preliminary damage assessment, hazard risk management, and floodplain mapping."

**ALIGN WITH FEDERAL LAW STANDARD**

**SECTION 4.** G.S. 63-96 reads as rewritten:

"§ 63-96. **Permit required for commercial operation of unmanned aircraft systems.**

...

(b) No person shall be issued a permit under this section unless all of the following apply:

(1) The person is at least 16 years of age the minimum age required by federal regulation for operation of an unmanned aircraft system.



- (2) ~~The person possesses a valid drivers license issued by any state or territory of the United States or the District of Columbia.~~ government-issued photographic identification acceptable to the Federal Aviation Administration for issuing authorization to operate an unmanned aircraft system.
- (3) The person has passed the knowledge test for operating an unmanned aircraft system as prescribed in G.S. 63-95(b).
- (4) The person has satisfied all other applicable requirements of this Article or federal regulation.

...  
 (d) The Division shall develop and administer a program that complies with all applicable federal regulations to issue permits to operators of unmanned aircraft systems for commercial ~~purposes.~~ purposes, including a fee structure for permits. Criteria and requirements established under the subdivisions set forth in this subsection shall be no more restrictive than the rules or regulations adopted by the Federal Aviation Administration setting forth the criteria and requirements under which a person may operate an unmanned aircraft system for commercial purposes. The program must include the following components:

- ...  
~~(2) A fee structure for permits.~~
- ...  
 (7) A designation of the geographic area within which a permittee shall be authorized to operate an unmanned aircraft system. ~~The rules adopted by the Division for designating a geographic area pursuant to this subdivision shall be no more restrictive than the rules or regulations adopted by the Federal Aviation Administration for designating a geographic area for the commercial operation of unmanned aircraft systems.~~

...  
 (f) ~~The~~ Subject to the limitations set forth in subsection (d) of this section, the Division may issue rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this section."

**EXEMPT MODEL AIRCRAFT USED FOR HOBBY OR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES FROM TRAINING AND PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS OF STATE LAW**

**SECTION 5.** Article 10 of Chapter 63 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 63-94. Applicability of Article.**

(a) Applicability. — This Article does not apply to model aircraft, as defined in subsection (b) of this section.

(b) Model aircraft. — An aircraft, as defined in G.S. 63-1, that is mechanically driven or launched into flight and that meets all of the following requirements:

- a. Is flown solely for hobby or recreational purposes.
- b. Is not used for payment, consideration, gratuity, or benefit, directly or indirectly charged, demanded, received, or collected, by any person for the use of the aircraft or any photographic or video image produced by the aircraft."

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

**SECTION 6.** Section 1 of this act becomes effective December 1, 2017, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date and acts occurring and causes of action arising on or after that date. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 29<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2017.

s/ Daniel J. Forest  
President of the Senate

s/ Tim Moore  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Roy Cooper  
Governor

Approved 11:39 a.m. this 21<sup>st</sup> day of July, 2017