

Notification of Serious Incidents

49 C.F.R. § 830.5, Immediate Notification, instructs operators of civil aircraft and certain public aircraft to immediately notify the NTSB when an accident or listed serious incident occurs. These notification requirements apply to unmanned aircraft operators. They do not apply to a model aircraft flown for hobby or recreational purposes within visual line of sight from the person operating the aircraft. [Implication of Notification Requirements to Exclude Model Aircraft](#), 80 Fed. Reg. 34736 (Sept. 11, 2015) (incorporating the definition of "model aircraft" in Section 336(e) of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, Pub. L. 112-95, Title III, Subtitle B, 126 Stat. 11, 77-78).

An unmanned aircraft operator subject to § 830.5 must report an unmanned aircraft accident immediately to the NTSB Response Operations Center; this web-based form may only be used to report a serious incident.

An unmanned aircraft accident is defined in 49 C.F.R. § 830.5 as an occurrence associated with the operation of any public or civil unmanned aircraft system that takes place between the time that the system is activated with the purpose of flight and the time that the system is deactivated at the conclusion of its mission, in which:

- (1) Any person suffers death or serious injury; or
- (2) The aircraft has a maximum gross takeoff weight of 300 pounds or greater and sustains substantial damage.

Operators must consider that the rest of the reporting requirements for serious incidents listed in section 830.5 apply regardless of weight. Listed serious incidents that apply to small UAS include the following events.

- Flight control system malfunction or failure: For an unmanned aircraft, a true "fly-away" would qualify. A lost link that behaves as expected does not qualify.
- Inability of any required flight crewmember to perform normal flight duties as a result of injury or illness. Required flight crewmember is the pilot, remote pilot, or visual observer if required by an exemption under section 333 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, Pub. L. 112-95, Title III, Subtitle B, 112 Stat. 11, 77-78 or FAA regulation; this does not include an unnecessary payload operator.
- Inflight fire, which is expected to be generally associated with batteries.
- Aircraft collision in flight.
- More than \$25,000 in damage to objects other than the aircraft.
- Release of all or a portion of a propeller blade from an aircraft, excluding release caused solely by ground contact.
- Damage to helicopter tail or main rotor blades, including ground damage, that requires major repair or replacement of the blade(s).
- An aircraft is overdue and is believed to have been involved in an accident.

Below are examples of potential events.

- A small multirotor UAS has a fly-away and crashes into a tree, destroying the aircraft: Not an accident, (though substantial damage, too small, and no injuries), but the operator is required to notify the NTSB of a flight control malfunction, and may use this web form to do so. NTSB may investigate.
- A small multirotor UAS has a fly-away and strikes a bystander causing serious injury: Accident (resulted in serious injury). The operator is required to immediately notify the NTSB Response Operations Center. The NTSB must investigate the accident and determine a probable cause.
- A small multirotor UAS hits a tree due to pilot inattention on a windy day: Not an accident (too small, even if substantial damage). However, the operator is required to notify the NTSB if the blades are replaced, and may use this web form to do so.
- A large, experimental UAS (400 lbs) has a structural failure and crashes in a remote area: Accident (substantial damage and gross takeoff weight of 300 lbs. or greater). The operator is required to immediately notify the NTSB Response Operations Center. NTSB must investigate and determine a probable cause.

For further information or questions, you may contact the NTSB, bill.english@ntsb.gov; 202-297-8875.