

Texas Representative Roberto R. Alonzo's

Capitol Report



Drone Owners Required to Register Aircrafts with FAA

The Federal Aviation Association officially launched its done registry right before the holidays, which now requires all drones weighing .55 pounds and less than 55 pounds to be registered. All drones purchased before Dec. 21, 2015 must be registered by February 19th, and any drones bought later, including those last minute Christmas presents, should be registered before their first flight.

The need for registration became evident when some people started flying drones irresponsibly. Operators flew them too close to manned aircraft, around national monuments and near firefighters combating western wildfires. Holding those people accountable was difficult because a drone can be operated from a good distance away. Even if it crashed and was recovered, law enforcement had no 'operator information' to follow up with. With the new registration policy in place owners must provide their name, physical address and email address. They'll pay \$5 for the privilege, and in return, they will receive a registration number that they must put on their drones and will be valid for 3 years.

" Indeed, operating a drone can be a fun and interesting hobby but it is also important to understand that you are accountable to the public for flying responsibly. Before you rush outside to take flight, remember to register your drone with the FAA. Registering your drone is any extremely important step in the set up process that you do not want to ignore," stated Rep. Roberto Alonzo.

Flying a drone without properly registering could mean stiff fines for the owner. The maximum civil penalty is a fine of up to \$27,000 from the FAA. In addition to those, you could also potentially face criminal penalties, including jail time and fines upwards of \$250,00.



Texas Open-Carry Law Goes into Effect Jan. 1

Starting January 1, 2016, Texans with a concealed handgun license will be allowed to carry their firearms openly, with some restrictions. In order to remain within the legal parameters, those licensed to carry must holster their gun in a hip or belt holster.

"The Second Amendment is one that is highly valued by many Texans. However, protecting the safety and rights of ALL citizens, both those that choose to bear arms and those that do not, should take precedent in moving forward with the new Open-Carry Gun Laws," urges Rep. Alonzo

Most laws passed in the 2015 legislative session took effect Sept.1, but open carry was given a four-month delay at the Departments of Public Safety's request to better prepare law officers for the change. Officers have received and reviewed the law, and dispatchers have been trained to ask a series of questions if people call in regards to open-carry.

Under the law, private businesses and places of worship can choose not to allow exposed firearms on their premises by displaying approved signs. The state's "campus carry" law that goes into effect Aug. 1, 2016 for public universities will allow permit holders to carry only concealed handguns on campus. However, private schools can still opt-out of this firearms law. Southern Methodist University and Texas Christian University are among those private schools to 'opt-out,' in adherence of their long-standing ban on weapons.



Rep. Alonzo presents a \$10,000 check to James Hogg Elementary on behalf of AT&T.