Unmanned Vehicle Systems

Unmanned vehicle systems (UVS) are poised to revolutionize modern life and commerce, and Perkins Coie is part of that revolution. We handle complex matters and business issues for companies designing, building and using unmanned aircraft and other unmanned vehicles.

Perkins Coie advises, counsels and represents UVS industry clients, from startup manufacturers of unmanned vehicles to major corporations expanding into the UVS industry, in such areas as:

- Regulatory Compliance
- Intellectual Property Protection and Enforcement
- Licensing and Monetization
- Corporate Governance
- Privacy and Security
- Risk Management
- Product Liability and Personal Injury
- Litigation
- Government Relations
- Supply Chain Issues
- Insurance Recovery

FOCUSED ON INNOVATION, EXPERIENCED WORKING WITH STARTUPS

Technological innovations are the lifeblood of the UVS industry, and Perkins Coie advises corporations, inventors, entrepreneurs and innovators on intellectual property law relevant to the protection of their vital IP assets.

Startups and emerging companies form a large portion of the UVS industry. We provide newly established businesses with practical, strategic advice on overcoming challenges at all stages of growth, from incorporation to monetization and exit. Perkins Coie attorneys have handled thousands of venture financings and have significant experience with private debt and equity financing transactions for emerging company clients.

Perkins Coie provides UVS clients with guidance on the full range of legal issues they face in:

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

UVS companies confront a rapidly changing regulatory environment. Perkins Coie’s experience helps companies navigate regulations promulgated by the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, as well as state and local authorities. We also have experience preparing Section 333 exemption petitions for commercial UVS operations.

PATENT AND INTELLIGENT PROPERTY PROTECTION

We are known for the technical background of our intellectual property law attorneys. Many of our UVS team members have backgrounds in computer science, electronics, aerospace and aeronautical and astronautical engineering. Several of our attorneys have examined patent applications in the field of aeronautics and astronautics at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and some are licensed pilots as well.
Soaring Into The Future - Commercial UAVs And How To Be Legal

Are you using your drone legally? Rules governing the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) industry are evolving, making it easy to unintentionally be on the wrong side of the law. In this video, Perkins Coie highlights some of the regulations and permits in effect once your drone crosses from personal use to commercial. What else to consider? Privacy, intellectual property, product liability insurance and beyond. Take a look at our drone-shot video to learn more.

CONTACT US

The Unmanned Vehicle Systems team works with numerous practices and industries. For more information about a specific area of focus, please contact the attorneys listed below.
INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED TEAM COMMITTED TO THE UVS INDUSTRY

We were one of the first firms to form an interdisciplinary team of attorneys to provide strategic guidance for companies designing, building and using unmanned aircraft and other unmanned vehicles. As strategic members of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI), the world’s largest nonprofit organization devoted exclusively to advancing the unmanned systems and robotics community, we stand committed in fostering innovation and continuing to help the industry establish technical, safety, application and policy standards. Our attorneys are featured at industry events such as the International Aviation Women’s Association (IAWA), Commercial UAV and AUVSI’s Xponential. Our work on behalf of UVS clients spans the spectrum from startup manufacturers of unmanned vehicles to major corporations expanding into the UVS industry. As governmental and commercial applications of UVS continue their revolutionary trajectory, we are at the forefront of the industry, working with clients as they move into more consumer-facing models of devices.

Perkins Coie represents emerging companies and large public technology companies across diverse industry sectors, including aerospace, robotics, semiconductors, software and electronics. We are internationally recognized in many of the areas where we represent our UVS industry clients. Our practice recognitions include:

- Ranked Band 1 in Aviation Litigation, Chambers USA (2009 – 2017)
- Named a “Leader” among tech-savvy firms by BTI Brand Elite (2016)
- Named one of the “4 Top Law Firms in Silicon Valley” according to tech CEO's, as reported by Inc. Magazine (June 2016)
- Named the Go-To BigLaw Firm for Silicon Valley for Entrepreneurs (2017)
- Named Privacy “Practice Group of the Year,” Law360 (2013)

EXPERIENCE

THE BOEING COMPANY
Represented Boeing, the world's largest aerospace company and leading manufacturer of commercial jetliners, defense, space and security systems, and service provider of aftermarket support, in its acquisition of Aurora Flight Sciences, a world-class innovator, developer and manufacturer of advanced aerospace platforms and autonomous systems.

SKYWARD
Represented Skyward, the leading operations management solution for commercial drone businesses, in its acquisition by Verizon Communications Inc., provider of communications and entertainment services over mobile broadband. Skyward brings drone operations management to the Verizon IoT portfolio, simplifying drone operations and management for organizations of any size.

ELBIT SYSTEMS
Represent international defense contractor in bankruptcy case of sole source supplier of components for the contractor’s unmanned aerial vehicles, including protecting rights as licensee, obtaining return of property, impact of asset sale and creditor issues.

TITAN AEROSPACE
Provide corporate and intellectual property representation and counseling for the company, including patent prosecution and counseling in the areas of aerodynamics, solar cells and manufacturing.

THE BOEING COMPANY
Represent The Boeing Company in all areas of intellectual property protection and several other areas of law relating to Boeing’s technology, including FAA and other regulatory compliance, as well as product liability. We provide patent preparation, prosecution and opinion work for all areas of Boeing technology, including composite structures design and manufacturing, guidance systems,
propulsion, electrical power generation and management, and fuel systems.

**INSITU, INC.**
Provide patent portfolio planning, development and counseling, including patent preparation, prosecution, evaluation, analysis and opinion work for Insitu, the leading manufacturer of unmanned aircraft systems in the fields of aerodynamics, propulsion, avionics and software.

**COMPLIANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT COUNSEL TO FORTUNE 100 MANUFACTURER**
Advise Fortune 100 manufacturer and seller of high-tech consumer products on regulatory compliance (e.g., CPSC), warranties, contractual risk management and product liability prevention.

**NEWS**

**03.11.2019**
*Perkins Coie Attorneys Quoted in Commercial UAV News - The Past as Prologue: What Can the History of Mobile Networks Tell Us About the Future of UAS?*
**General News**
Commercial UAV News
Dave St. John-Larkin and Daniel Ridlon were quoted in the Commercial UAV News article, “The Past as Prologue: What Can the History of Mobile Networks Tell Us About the Future of UAS?” regarding the how rapid technological innovation of the UAV space.

**02.06.2019**
*Bill Malley Quoted in Robotics Business Review - Liability Concerns, Regulation Authority Top Obstacles for Self-Driving Growth, Survey Says*
**General News**
Robotics Business Review
Bill Malley was quoted in the Robotics Business Review article, "Liability Concerns, Regulation Authority Top Obstacles for Self-Driving Growth, Survey Says," regarding the updating of existing requirements when new technology emerges.

**PUBLICATIONS**

**02.14.2019**
*FAA Updates Small UAS Rules*
**Updates**
The FAA published proposed rules on the Operation of Small Unmanned Aircraft Over People on February 13, 2019.

**10.16.2018**
*USDOT Issues Updated Policy on Automated Vehicles, Signaling Rulemakings to Come*
**Updates**
The United States Department of Transportation recently released its latest policy statement on automated vehicle technologies, *Automated Driving Systems 3.0: Preparing for the Future of Transportation.*

**10.04.2018**
*Congress Passes FAA Reauthorization Bill That Opens Door for Significant Changes to UAS Regulations*
**Updates**
On October 3, 2018, the Senate passed a bipartisan bill that will reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for five years. The bill, which is referred to as the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (H.R. 302), was previously passed by the House of Representatives.

**01.23.2018**
*USDOT Seeks Comment on Removing Regulatory Barriers to Autonomous Vehicles*
**Updates**
Last week, three U.S. Department of Transportation agencies issued requests for comment on ways to update federal regulations and policies to allow for the safe testing and deployment of autonomous vehicles.

**01.17.2018**
*Washington Could Lead on Autonomous Maritime Technologies*
**Articles**
Seattle Times
As Washington thinks about its maritime future, it should think critically about how new technologies will change the industry.

11.10.2017

**FAA Details Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Integration Pilot Program**

Updates

The FAA published a notice on the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Integration Pilot Program this week. The program, initiated by a Presidential Memorandum, is designed to accelerate safe UAS integration through public-private sector partnerships.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Unmanned Vehicle Systems Event Calendar**

Speaking Engagements

Join Perkins Coie at one of the unmanned vehicle conferences we’ll be attending!

05.02.2019

**Regulatory Round-Up: New Developments in Federal, State, and Local Regulation of AVs**

Speaking Engagements

Opening the Road to Automated Vehicles

Panelist

Xponential / Chicago, IL

05.01.2019

**Startup Showdown**

Speaking Engagements

Panelist

Xponential / Chicago, IL

03.14.2019

**Young Professionals in Energy Autonomous Vehicles Event**

Speaking Engagements

Perkins Coie / San Francisco, CA

10.19.2018

**Who Regulates Automated Vehicles? A Brief Tour of the Shifting Regulatory Landscape**

Speaking Engagements

Breakfast Briefing

Cleantech San Diego / San Diego, CA

07.10.2018

**The Emerging Role of State and Local Governments in Regulating Autonomous Vehicles**

Speaking Engagements

AUVSI Automated Vehicles Symposium, Enterprise Solutions Series / San Francisco, CA

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