

## Secretary Chao Announces Commercial Space Launch and Reentry Rule

October 19, 2020

On October 15, 2020, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao announced the publication of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Streamlined Launch and Reentry Licensing Requirements **Final Rule** for commercial space transportation launches and reentries. The rule, which will take effect 90 days after publication, is exactly two and a half years in the making, from the charter of the associated aviation rulemaking committee (ARC) to this week's publication.

This rule aims to simplify and accelerate the process to obtain licenses for commercial space launch and reentry in an effort to foster innovation without jeopardizing the safety of other users of the National Airspace System (NAS). A key driver within the rule is a shift from prescriptive requirements to more flexible performance-based criteria, in alignment with other recent regulatory efforts within the agency.

The FAA also released three Advisory Circulars (AC) concurrently with the rule and has requested public review and comment over the next 30 days. Those ACs are **AC 450.101-1** High Consequence Protection, **AC 450.115-1** High Fidelity Flight Safety Analysis and **AC 450.141-1** Computing Systems Safety.

The publication of this rule is the latest action in a broader effort driven by the President's Space Policy Directive-2, **Streamlining Regulations on Commercial Use of Space**. The recently reorganized FAA Office of Commercial Space Transportation is working to consolidate and review a number of regulations to allow regulatory pathways to keep up with the pace of technology and position the United States to remain the world leader in space exploration and commercialization.

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