



Watershed Moment for UAS: Iridium Connected Drones from American Aerospace Granted First FAA Waiver for BVLOS Commercial Operations

Iridium partner American Aerospace received FAA approval for BVLOS drone operations on behalf of a recently announced oil and gas industry customer, based on proven Detect and Avoid aircraft right of way capability

MCLEAN, Va., May 15, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- [Iridium Communications Inc.](#) (Nasdaq: IRDM), a leading provider of global voice and data satellite communications, today announced a historic development for uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) operations beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS). Iridium partner [American Aerospace Technologies, Inc.](#) (AATI) was granted a first-of-its-kind waiver from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to conduct UAS surveillance of critical infrastructure in the San Joaquin Valley on behalf of a multinational oil and gas company. This waiver may serve as a tipping point for wider adoption of safe and scalable UAS operations in the National Airspace System (NAS).

Enabled by Iridium's truly global L-Band satellite connectivity, AATI's [AiRanger](#) is supporting remote aerial surveillance for the energy corporation's pipeline and production facilities. Iridium's low-latency network is providing reliable and cost-effective BVLOS connectivity, including remote Command and Control (C2) and Detect and Avoid (DAA) capabilities. Flying over a pipeline network, the large drones (over 200 lbs.) will send information via Iridium® satellites to quickly perform routine oil and gas pipeline inspections. Iridium partner [Blue Sky Network](#) customized the development and integration of its global, dual-mode [SkyLink 7100](#) voice, data, and BVLOS terminal installed on the aircraft. The Iridium Connected™ Skylink 7100 enables continuous tracking and C2 capabilities for aviation and UAV operations.

The Iridium Connected AiRanger is the first UAS to demonstrate compliance with industry consensus standards for the DAA system and meet FAA requirements for aircraft right of way BVLOS operations. This milestone helps pave the way for companies to deploy BVLOS UAS to support operations and achieve higher situational awareness, lowering inspection costs and maximizing value. The waiver demonstrates that Iridium satellite C2 capabilities can meet large drone BVLOS waiver requirements with the FAA.

"This certification shows innovation through the fusion of technology, partnership, and practical application," said John Peterson, Executive Director of Aviation, Iridium. "When aircraft manufacturers and communications providers get together, scalable business solutions can become a reality. Iridium and our partners AATI and Blue Sky Network are proud to lay the groundwork for scalable BVLOS operations and show what's possible with reliable satellite communications."

Iridium continues to collaborate with the drone industry in establishing safe separation using Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) avionics. Last year, Iridium published a [whitepaper](#) that addresses challenges faced in enabling a safe, scalable, and efficient adoption of UAS in the NAS, including how to maintain safe separation between aircraft and what supportive COTS avionics are readily available today. This whitepaper provides a recommended equipment list and highlights capabilities enabled by the Iridium network that support safe and scalable UAS operations in the NAS.

For more information about Iridium, visit: www.iridium.com

For a copy of Iridium's BVLOS whitepaper, visit: www.iridium.com/monitored-bvlos-safe-separation-whitepaper/

About Iridium Communications Inc.

Iridium® is the only mobile voice and data satellite communications network that spans the entire globe. Iridium enables connections between people, organizations, and assets to and from anywhere, in real time. Together with its ecosystem of partner companies, Iridium delivers an innovative and rich portfolio of reliable solutions for markets that require truly global communications. In 2024, Iridium acquired Satelles and announced the Iridium Satellite Time and Location service. Iridium Communications Inc. is headquartered in McLean, Va., U.S.A., and its common stock trades on the Nasdaq Global Select Market under the ticker symbol IRDM. For more information about Iridium products, services, and partner solutions, visit www.iridium.com.

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