

**§§ 435.36–435.40**

when assessed in combination with launch of the reentry vehicle, does not exceed acceptable risk for the conduct of an RLV mission as defined in paragraphs (a) and (b) of §431.35 of this subchapter.

**§§ 435.36–435.40 [Reserved]**

**Subpart D—Payload Reentry Review and Determination**

**§ 435.41 General.**

The FAA conducts a payload reentry review to examine the policy and safety issues related to the proposed reentry of a payload, except a U.S. Government payload, to determine whether the FAA will approve the reentry of the payload.

**§ 435.43 Payload reentry review requirements and procedures.**

Unless otherwise indicated in this subpart, regulations contained in part 431, subpart D of this subchapter applicable to a payload reentry review and determination for reentering a payload using an RLV shall apply to the payload reentry review conducted for a license to reenter a reentry vehicle under this part.

**§§ 435.44–435.50 [Reserved]**

**Subpart E—Post-Licensing Requirements—Reentry License Terms and Conditions**

**§ 435.51 General.**

Unless otherwise indicated in this subpart, post-licensing requirements contained in part 431 subpart E, of this subchapter applicable to a license to reenter an RLV shall apply to a license issued under this part.

**§§ 435.52–435.60 [Reserved]**

**Subpart F—Environmental Review**

**§ 435.61 General.**

Unless otherwise indicated in this subpart, environmental review requirements contained in part 431 subpart F, applicable to a license to reenter an RLV shall apply to an application for a reentry license under this part.

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**§§ 435.62–435.70 [Reserved]**

**PART 436 [RESERVED]**

**PART 437—EXPERIMENTAL PERMITS**

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**Subpart A—General Information****§ 437.1 Scope and organization of this part.**

(a) This part prescribes requirements for obtaining an experimental permit. It also prescribes post-permitting requirements with which a permittee must comply to maintain its permit. Part 413 of this subchapter contains procedures for applying for an experimental permit.

(b) Subpart A contains general information about an experimental permit. Subpart B contains requirements to obtain an experimental permit. Subpart C contains the safety requirements with which a permittee must comply while conducting permitted activities. Subpart D contains terms and conditions of an experimental permit.

**§ 437.3 Definitions.**

*Anomaly* means a problem that occurs during verification or operation of a system, subsystem, process, facility, or support equipment.

*Envelope expansion* means any portion of a flight where planned operations will subject a reusable suborbital rocket to the effects of altitude, velocity, acceleration, or burn duration that exceed a level or duration successfully verified during an earlier flight.

*Exclusion area* means an area, within an operating area, that a reusable suborbital rocket's instantaneous impact point may not traverse.

*Key flight-safety event* means a permitted flight activity that has an increased likelihood of causing a launch

accident compared with other portions of flight.

*Operating area* means a three-dimensional region where permitted flights may take place.

*Permitted vehicle* means a reusable suborbital rocket operated by a launch or reentry operator under an experimental permit.

*Reentry impact point* means the location of a reusable suborbital rocket's instantaneous impact point during its unpowered exoatmospheric suborbital flight.

**§ 437.5 Eligibility for an experimental permit.**

The FAA will issue an experimental permit to a person to launch or reenter a reusable suborbital rocket only for—

- (a) Research and development to test new design concepts, new equipment, or new operating techniques;
- (b) A showing of compliance with requirements for obtaining a license under this subchapter; or
- (c) Crew training before obtaining a license for a launch or reentry using the design of the rocket for which the permit would be issued.

**§ 437.7 Scope of an experimental permit.**

An experimental permit authorizes launch or reentry of a reusable suborbital rocket. The authorization includes pre- and post-flight ground operations as defined in this section.

(a) A pre-flight ground operation includes each operation that—

- (1) Takes place at a U.S. launch site; and
- (2) Meets the following criteria:
  - (i) Is closely proximate in time to flight,
  - (ii) Entails critical steps preparatory to initiating flight,
  - (iii) Is unique to space launch, and
  - (iv) Is inherently so hazardous as to warrant the FAA's regulatory oversight.

(b) A post-flight ground operation includes each operation necessary to return the reusable suborbital rocket to a safe condition after it lands or impacts.

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### § 437.9 Issuance of an experimental permit.

The FAA issues an experimental permit authorizing an unlimited number of launches or reentries for a sub-orbital rocket design for the uses described in § 437.5.

### § 437.11 Duration of an experimental permit.

An experimental permit lasts for one year from the date it is issued. A permittee may apply to renew a permit yearly under part 413 of this subchapter.

### § 437.13 Additional experimental permit terms and conditions.

The FAA may modify an experimental permit at any time by modifying or adding permit terms and conditions to ensure compliance with 51 U.S.C. Subtitle V, chapter 509.

[Docket No. FAA-2012-0232, 77 FR 20533, Apr. 5, 2012]

### § 437.15 Transfer of an experimental permit.

An experimental permit is not transferable.

### § 437.17 Rights not conferred by an experimental permit.

Issuance of an experimental permit does not relieve a permittee of its obligation to comply with any requirement of law that applies to its activities.

## Subpart B—Requirements to Obtain an Experimental Permit

### § 437.21 General.

To obtain an experimental permit an applicant must make the demonstrations and provide the information required by this section.

(a) *This subpart.* An applicant must provide a program description, a flight test plan, and operational safety documentation as required by this subpart.

(b) *Other regulations*—(1) *Environmental.* An applicant must provide enough information for the FAA to analyze the environmental impacts associated with proposed reusable sub-orbital rocket launches or reentries. The information provided by an applicant must be sufficient to enable the

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FAA to comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*, and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, 40 CFR parts 1500–1508.

(2) *Financial responsibility.* An applicant must provide the information required by part 3 of appendix A of part 440 for the FAA to conduct a maximum probable loss analysis.

(3) *Human space flight.* An applicant proposing launch or reentry with flight crew or a space flight participant on board a reusable suborbital rocket must demonstrate compliance with §§ 460.5, 460.7, 460.11, 460.13, 460.15, 460.17, 460.51 and 460.53 of this subchapter.

(c) *Use of a safety approval.* If an applicant proposes to use any reusable suborbital rocket, safety system, process, service, or personnel for which the FAA has issued a safety approval under part 414 of this subchapter, the FAA will not reevaluate that safety element to the extent its use is within its approved envelope. As part of the application process, the FAA will evaluate the integration of that safety element into vehicle systems or operations.

(d) *Inspection before issuing a permit.* Before the FAA issues an experimental permit, an applicant must make each reusable suborbital rocket planned to be flown available to the FAA for inspection. The FAA will determine whether each reusable suborbital rocket is built as represented in the application.

(e) *Other requirements.* The FAA may require additional analyses, information, or agreements if necessary to protect public health and safety, safety of property, and national security and foreign policy interests of the United States.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### § 437.23 Program description.

(a) An applicant must provide—

(1) Dimensioned three-view drawings or photographs of the reusable sub-orbital rocket; and

(2) Gross liftoff weight and thrust profile of the reusable suborbital rocket.

(b) An applicant must describe—

(1) All reusable suborbital rocket systems, including any structural, flight control, thermal, pneumatic, hydraulic, propulsion, electrical, environmental control, software and computing systems, avionics, and guidance systems used in the reusable suborbital rocket;

(2) The types and quantities of all propellants used in the reusable suborbital rocket;

(3) The types and quantities of any hazardous materials used in the reusable suborbital rocket;

(4) The purpose for which a reusable suborbital rocket is to be flown; and

(5) Each payload or payload class planned to be flown.

(c) An applicant must identify any foreign ownership of the applicant as follows:

(1) For a sole proprietorship or partnership, identify all foreign ownership,

(2) For a corporation, identify any foreign ownership interests of 10% or more, and

(3) For a joint venture, association, or other entity, identify any participating foreign entities.

#### FLIGHT TEST PLAN

##### § 437.25 Flight test plan.

An applicant must—

(a) Describe any flight test program, including estimated number of flights and key flight-safety events.

(b) Identify and describe the geographic coordinates of the boundaries of one or more proposed operating areas where it plans to perform its flights and that satisfy § 437.57(b) of subpart C. The FAA may designate one or more exclusion areas in accordance with § 437.57(c) of subpart C.

(c) For each operating area, provide the planned maximum altitude of the reusable suborbital rocket.

#### OPERATIONAL SAFETY DOCUMENTATION

##### § 437.27 Pre-flight and post-flight operations.

An applicant must demonstrate how it will meet the requirements of § 437.53(a) and (b) to establish a safety clear zone and verify that the public is outside that zone before and during any hazardous operation.

##### § 437.29 Hazard analysis.

(a) An applicant must perform a hazard analysis that complies with § 437.55(a).

(b) An applicant must provide to the FAA all the results of each step of the hazard analysis required by paragraph (a) of this section.

##### § 437.31 Verification of operating area containment and key flight-safety event limitations.

(a) An applicant must identify, describe, and provide verification evidence of the methods and systems used to meet the requirement of § 437.57(a) to contain its reusable suborbital rocket's instantaneous impact point within an operating area and outside any exclusion area. The description must include, at a minimum—

(1) Proof of physical limits on the ability of the reusable suborbital rocket to leave the operating area; or

(2) Abort procedures and other safety measures derived from a system safety engineering process.

(b) An applicant must identify, describe, and provide verification evidence of the methods and systems used to meet the requirements of § 437.59 to conduct any key flight-safety event so that the reusable suborbital rocket's instantaneous impact point, including its expected dispersions, is over unpopulated or sparsely populated areas, and to conduct each reusable suborbital rocket flight so that the re-entry impact point does not loiter over a populated area.

##### § 437.33 Landing and impact locations.

An applicant must demonstrate that each location for nominal landing or any contingency abort landing of the reusable suborbital rocket, and each location for any nominal or contingency impact or landing of a component of that rocket, satisfies § 437.61.

##### § 437.35 Agreements.

An applicant must enter into the agreements required by § 437.63, and provide a copy to the FAA.

##### § 437.37 Tracking.

An applicant must identify and describe each method or system used to

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meet the tracking requirements of § 437.67.

**§ 437.39 Flight rules.**

An applicant must provide flight rules as required by § 437.71.

**§ 437.41 Mishap response plan.**

An applicant must provide a mishap response plan that meets the requirements of § 437.75(b).

**Subpart C—Safety Requirements**

**§ 437.51 Rest rules for vehicle safety operations personnel.**

A permittee must ensure that all vehicle safety operations personnel adhere to the work and rest standards in this section during permitted activities.

(a) No vehicle safety operations personnel may work more than:

- (1) 12 consecutive hours,
- (2) 60 hours in the 7 days preceding a permitted activity, or
- (3) 14 consecutive work days.

(b) All vehicle safety operations personnel must have at least 8 hours of rest after 12 hours of work.

(c) All vehicle safety operations personnel must receive a minimum 48-hour rest period after 5 consecutive days of 12-hour shifts.

**§ 437.53 Pre-flight and post-flight operations.**

A permittee must protect the public from adverse effects of hazardous operations and systems in preparing a reusable suborbital rocket for flight at a launch site in the United States and returning the reusable suborbital rocket and any support equipment to a safe condition after flight. At a minimum, a permittee must—

(a) Establish a safety clear zone that will contain the adverse effects of each operation involving a hazard; and

(b) Verify that the public is outside of the safety clear zone before and during any hazardous operation.

**§ 437.55 Hazard analysis.**

(a) A permittee must identify and characterize each of the hazards and assess the risk to public health and safety and the safety of property re-

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sulting from each permitted flight. This hazard analysis must—

(1) Identify and describe hazards, including but not limited to each of those that result from—

- (i) Component, subsystem, or system failures or faults;
- (ii) Software errors;
- (iii) Environmental conditions;
- (iv) Human errors;
- (v) Design inadequacies; or
- (vi) Procedural deficiencies.

(2) Determine the likelihood of occurrence and consequence for each hazard before risk elimination or mitigation.

(3) Ensure that the likelihood and consequence of each hazard meet the following criteria through risk elimination and mitigation measures:

(i) The likelihood of any hazardous condition that may cause death or serious injury to the public must be extremely remote.

(ii) The likelihood of any hazardous condition that may cause major property damage to the public, major safety-critical system damage or reduced capability, a significant reduction in safety margins, or a significant increase in crew workload must be remote.

(4) Identify and describe the risk elimination and mitigation measures required to satisfy paragraph (a)(3) of this section. The measures must include one or more of the following:

- (i) Designing for minimum risk,
- (ii) Incorporating safety devices,
- (iii) Providing warning devices, or
- (iv) Implementing procedures and training.

(5) Demonstrate that the risk elimination and mitigation measures achieve the risk levels of paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section through validation and verification. Verification includes:

- (i) Test data,
- (ii) Inspection results, or
- (iii) Analysis.

(b) A permittee must carry out the risk elimination and mitigation measures derived from its hazard analysis.

(c) A permittee must ensure the continued accuracy and validity of its hazard analysis throughout the term of its permit.

**§ 437.57 Operating area containment.**

(a) During each permitted flight, a permittee must contain its reusable suborbital rocket's instantaneous impact point within an operating area determined in accordance with paragraph (b) and outside any exclusion area defined by the FAA in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) An operating area—

(1) Must be large enough to contain each planned trajectory and all expected vehicle dispersions;

(2) Must contain enough unpopulated or sparsely populated area to perform key flight-safety events as required by § 437.59;

(3) May not contain or be adjacent to a densely populated area or large concentrations of members of the public; and

(4) May not contain or be adjacent to significant automobile traffic, railway traffic, or waterborne vessel traffic.

(c) The FAA may prohibit a reusable suborbital rocket's instantaneous impact point from traversing certain areas within an operating area by designating one or more areas as exclusion areas, if necessary to protect public health and safety, safety of property, or foreign policy or national security interests of the United States. An exclusion area may be confined to a specific phase of flight.

**§ 437.59 Key flight-safety event limitations.**

(a) A permittee must conduct any key flight-safety event so that the reusable suborbital rocket's instantaneous impact point, including its expected dispersion, is over an unpopulated or sparsely populated area. At a minimum, a key flight-safety event includes:

(1) Ignition of any primary rocket engine,

(2) Any staging event, or

(3) Any envelope expansion.

(b) A permittee must conduct each reusable suborbital rocket flight so that the reentry impact point does not loiter over a populated area.

**§ 437.61 Landing and impact locations.**

For a nominal or any contingency abort landing of a reusable suborbital rocket, or for any nominal or contin-

gency impact or landing of a component of that rocket, a permittee must use a location that—

(a) Is big enough to contain an impact, including debris dispersion upon impact; and

(b) At the time of landing or impact, does not contain any members of the public.

**§ 437.63 Agreements with other entities involved in a launch or reentry.**

A permittee must comply with the agreements required by this section.

(a) A permittee must have an agreement in writing with a Federal launch range operator, a licensed launch site operator, or any other party that provides access to or use of property and services required to support the safe launch or reentry under a permit.

(b) Unless otherwise addressed in agreements with a licensed launch site operator or a Federal launch range, a permittee must have an agreement in writing with the following:

(1) For overflight of navigable water, a written agreement between the applicant and the local United States Coast Guard district to establish procedures for issuing a Notice to Mariners before a permitted flight, and

(2) A written agreement between the applicant and responsible Air Traffic Control authority having jurisdiction over the airspace through which a permitted launch or reentry is to take place, for measures necessary to ensure the safety of aircraft. The agreement must, at a minimum, demonstrate satisfaction of §§ 437.69(a) and 437.71(d).

**§ 437.65 Collision avoidance analysis.**

(a) For a permitted flight with a planned maximum altitude greater than 150 kilometers, a permittee must obtain a collision avoidance analysis from United States Strategic Command.

(b) The collision avoidance analysis must establish each period during which a permittee may not initiate flight to ensure that a permitted vehicle and any jettisoned components do not pass closer than 200 kilometers to a manned or mannable orbital object. A distance of less than 200 kilometers may be used if the distance provides an equivalent level of safety, and if the

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distance accounts for all uncertainties in the analysis.

### § 437.67 Tracking a reusable suborbital rocket.

A permittee must—

(a) During permitted flight, measure in real time the position and velocity of its reusable suborbital rocket; and

(b) Provide position and velocity data to the FAA for post-flight use.

### § 437.69 Communications.

(a) A permittee must be in communication with Air Traffic Control during all phases of flight.

(b) A permittee must record communications affecting the safety of the flight.

### § 437.71 Flight rules.

(a) Before initiating rocket-powered flight, a permittee must confirm that all systems and operations necessary to ensure that safety measures derived from §§ 437.55, 437.57, 437.59, 437.61, 437.63, 437.65, 437.67, and 437.69 are within acceptable limits.

(b) During all phases of flight, a permittee must—

(1) Follow flight rules that ensure compliance with §§ 437.55, 437.57, 437.59, and 437.61; and

(2) Abort the flight if it would endanger the public.

(c) A permittee may not operate a reusable suborbital rocket in a careless or reckless manner that would endanger any member of the public during any phase of flight.

(d) A permittee may not operate a reusable suborbital rocket in areas designated in a Notice to Airmen under § 91.137, § 91.138, § 91.141, or § 91.145 of this title, unless authorized by:

(1) Air Traffic Control; or

(2) A Flight Standards Certificate of Waiver or Authorization.

(e) For any phase of flight where a permittee operates a reusable suborbital rocket like an aircraft in the National Airspace System, a permittee must comply with the provisions of part 91 of this title specified in an experimental permit issued under this part.

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### § 437.73 Anomaly recording, reporting and implementation of corrective actions.

(a) A permittee must record each anomaly that affects a safety-critical system, subsystem, process, facility, or support equipment.

(b) A permittee must identify all root causes of each anomaly, and implement all corrective actions for each anomaly.

(c) A permittee must report to the FAA any anomaly of any system that is necessary for complying with §§ 437.55(a)(3), 437.57, and 437.59, and must report the corrective action for each reported anomaly.

(d) A permittee must implement each corrective action before the next flight.

### § 437.75 Mishap reporting, responding, and investigating.

A permittee must report, respond to, and investigate mishaps that occur during permitted activities, in accordance with this section.

(a) *Reporting requirements.* A permittee must—

(1) Immediately notify the FAA Washington Operations Center if there is a launch or reentry accident or incident or a mishap that involves a fatality or serious injury, as defined in 49 CFR 830.2;

(2) Notify within 24 hours the FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation if there is a mishap that does not involve a fatality or serious injury, as defined in 49 CFR 830.2; and

(3) Submit within 5 days of the event a written preliminary report to the FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation if there is a launch or reentry accident or incident during a permitted flight. The report must identify the event as a launch or reentry accident or incident, and must include:

(i) The date and time of occurrence,

(ii) A description of the event and sequence of events leading to the launch or reentry accident, or launch or reentry incident, to the extent known,

(iii) The intended and actual location of launch or reentry, including landing or impact on Earth,

(iv) A description of any payload,

(v) The number and general description of any fatalities and injuries,

(vi) Property damage, if any, and an estimate of its value,

(vii) A description of any hazardous materials involved in the event, whether on the reusable suborbital rocket or on the ground,

(viii) Action taken by any person to contain the consequences of the event, and

(ix) Weather conditions at the time of the event.

(b) *Response requirements.* A permittee must—

(1) Immediately—

(i) Ensure the consequences of a mishap are contained and minimized; and

(ii) Ensure data and physical evidence are preserved.

(2) Report to and cooperate with FAA and National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigations and designate one or more points of contact for the FAA or NTSB; and

(3) Identify and adopt preventive measures for avoiding a recurrence of the event.

(c) *Investigation requirements.* A permittee must—

(1) Investigate the root cause of an event described in paragraph (a) of this section;

(2) Report investigation results to the FAA upon completion; and

(3) Identify responsibilities, including reporting responsibilities, for personnel assigned to conduct investigations and for any unrelated persons that the permittee retains to conduct or participate in investigations.

#### § 437.77 Additional safety requirements.

The FAA may impose additional safety requirements on an applicant or permittee proposing an activity with a hazard not otherwise addressed in this part. This may include a toxic hazard or the use of solid propellants. The FAA may also require the permittee to conduct additional analyses of the cause of any anomaly and corrective actions.

### Subpart D—Terms and Conditions of an Experimental Permit

#### § 437.81 Public safety responsibility.

A permittee must ensure that a launch or reentry conducted under an

experimental permit is safe, and must protect public health and safety and the safety of property.

#### § 437.83 Compliance with experimental permit.

A permittee must conduct any launch or reentry under an experimental permit in accordance with representations made in its permit application, with subparts C and D of this part, and with terms and conditions contained in the permit.

#### § 437.85 Allowable design changes; modification of an experimental permit.

(a) The FAA will identify in the experimental permit the type of changes that the permittee may make to the reusable suborbital rocket design without invalidating the permit.

(b) Except for design changes made under paragraph (a) of this section, a permittee must ask the FAA to modify the experimental permit if—

(1) It proposes to conduct permitted activities in a manner not authorized by the permit; or

(2) Any representation in its permit application that is material to public health and safety or the safety of property is no longer accurate or complete.

(c) A permittee must prepare an application to modify an experimental permit and submit it in accordance with part 413 of this subchapter. If requested during the application process, the FAA may approve an alternate method for requesting permit modifications. The permittee must indicate any part of its permit that would be changed or affected by a proposed modification.

(d) When a permittee proposes a modification, the FAA reviews the determinations made on the experimental permit to decide whether they remain valid.

(e) When the FAA approves a modification, it issues the permittee either a written approval or a permit order modifying the permit if a stated term or condition of the permit is changed, added, or deleted. An approval has the full force and effect of a permit order and is part of the permit record.

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**§ 437.87 Records.**

(a) Except as required by paragraph (b) of this section, a permittee must maintain for 3 years all records, data, and other material necessary to verify that a permittee conducted its launch or reentry in accordance with its permit.

(b) If there is a launch or reentry accident or incident, a permittee must preserve all records related to the event. A permittee must keep the records until after any Federal investigation and the FAA advises the permittee that it may dispose of them.

(c) A permittee must make all records that it must maintain under this section available to Federal officials for inspection and copying.

**§ 437.89 Pre-flight reporting.**

(a) Not later than 30 days before each flight or series of flights conducted under an experimental permit, a permittee must provide the FAA with the following information:

(1) Any payload to be flown, including any payload operations during the flight,

(2) When the flight or series of flights are planned,

(3) The operating area for each flight, and

(4) The planned maximum altitude for each flight.

(b) Not later than 15 days before each permitted flight planned to reach greater than 150 km altitude, a permittee must provide the FAA its planned trajectory for a collision avoidance analysis.

**§ 437.91 For-hire prohibition.**

No permittee may carry any property or human being for compensation or hire on a reusable suborbital rocket.

**§ 437.93 Compliance monitoring.**

A permittee must allow access by, and cooperate with, federal officers or employees or other individuals authorized by the FAA to observe any activities of the permittee, or of its contractors or subcontractors, associated with the conduct of permitted activities.

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**§ 437.95 Inspection of additional reusable suborbital rockets.**

A permittee may launch or reenter additional reusable suborbital rockets of the same design under the permit after the FAA inspects each additional reusable suborbital rocket.

**PARTS 438–439 [RESERVED]**

**PART 440—FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**Subpart A—Financial Responsibility for Licensed and Permitted Activities**

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