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## MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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### Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UASs)

The use of UAS in private and public sectors has increased dramatically. Commercial vessel and facility operators regulated by the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) have reported UAS operations as suspicious activity and have expressed concern about the security implications of UAS use. The ability of UAS to take high resolution photos and videos from a small, quiet, highly maneuverable platform (reconnaissance and surveillance activity) raises obvious security concerns. Nevertheless, an observer must be discerning in their judgment when affected by UAS activity.

Suspicious UAS activity includes the following:

- (1) Reconnaissance and surveillance activities, indicated by repeated activities at a particular place and time, e.g., flyovers, hovering at low altitudes, and prolonged time on station.
- (2) Testing of facility security protocols using UAS, indicated by flying by a target, moving into sensitive areas, and observing the reaction of security personnel (e.g., the time it takes to respond to an incident or the routes taken to a specific location).

MTSA-regulated vessel and facility operators are required to report suspicious activity to the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802 in accordance with 33 CFR 101.305. Given the inherently subjective nature of assessing suspicious activity, and the importance of reporting, observers should err on the side of caution and report activity whenever they are in doubt.

A UAS includes the unmanned aircraft and all associated system support equipment, control station, data links, telemetry, communications and navigation equipment, necessary to operate the unmanned aircraft. The terms "drone" or "UAV" are not used to define a UAS in Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) policies or regulations and should be avoided when reporting any UAS activity to prevent confusion. The FAA is developing regulations to better address UAS operations. Additional information on UAS is available at <http://www.faa.gov/uas/>



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