



## Federal Aviation Administration

# FAA Releases Aerospace Forecast

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**WASHINGTON** – All indicators show that air travel in the United States is strong and according to the [FAA Aerospace Forecast Fiscal Years \(FY\) 2018-2038](https://www.faa.gov/data_research/aviation/aerospace_forecasts/)

([https://www.faa.gov/data\\_research/aviation/aerospace\\_forecasts/](https://www.faa.gov/data_research/aviation/aerospace_forecasts/)), the trend will continue. This is occurring while American air travelers are experiencing the [highest levels of safety](https://www.faa.gov/news/media/2018_Administrators_Fact_Book.pdf) ([https://www.faa.gov/news/media/2018\\_Administrators\\_Fact\\_Book.pdf](https://www.faa.gov/news/media/2018_Administrators_Fact_Book.pdf)) (PDF) in modern aviation history.

The [FAA](https://www.faa.gov) (<https://www.faa.gov>) forecasts U.S. airline enplanements (passengers) will increase from 840.8 million in 2017 to 1.28 billion in 2038, an increase of more than 400 million passengers. Domestic enplanements are set to increase 4.7 percent in 2018 and then grow at an average rate of 1.7 percent per year during the remaining 20-year forecast period. International enplanements are forecast to increase 5.0 percent in 2018 and then grow an average of 3.3 percent per year for the rest of the forecast period.

Revenue Passenger Miles (RPMs) are the industry standard for measuring air travel demand. An RPM represents one revenue passenger traveling one mile. The FAA forecasts U.S. airline system RPMs to grow at an average rate of 2.5 percent per year between 2017 through 2038, with international RPMs projected to have average annual increases of 3.2 percent per year during the forecast period.

A key to meeting this growth in air travel, while maintaining high levels of safety and efficiency, is to ensure we have the necessary infrastructure to meet demand. Underscoring this point, the FAA forecasts total operations (landings and take-offs) at FAA and contract towers to reach 51.0 million in 2018 and grow to 60.5 million in 2038.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) and the FAA are planning for this growth in air travel with robust infrastructure investments through the [Airport Improvement Program \(https://www.faa.gov/airports/aip/\)](https://www.faa.gov/airports/aip/). [Air traffic modernization \(https://www.faa.gov/nextgen/\)](https://www.faa.gov/nextgen/) is rapidly moving towards satellite navigation technologies and procedures which will continue to allow enhanced navigation for more aircraft.

The forecast also highlights the phenomenal growth in the use of [Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\) \(https://www.faa.gov/uas/\)](https://www.faa.gov/uas/), often referred to as drones. The FAA projects the small model hobbyist UAS fleet to more than double from an estimated 1.1 million vehicles in 2017 to 2.4 million units by 2022. The commercial, small non-model UAS fleet is set to grow from 110,604 in 2017 to 451,800 in 2022. The number of remote pilots is set to increase from 73,673 in 2017 to 301,000 in 2022.

In addition to UAS, another rapidly growing aerospace field is the FAA's licensing, oversight and regulation of [commercial space transportation activities \(https://www.faa.gov/news/fact\\_sheets/news\\_story.cfm?newsId=19074\)](https://www.faa.gov/news/fact_sheets/news_story.cfm?newsId=19074). The FAA projects that commercial space launch and re-entry operations may triple from 22 in 2017 to as high as 61 operations in 2020.

The FAA aerospace forecast is the industry-wide standard of measurement of U.S. aviation-related activities. This stems from the enormous variety of data, trends and other factors the agency uses to develop it, such as generally accepted economic projections, surveys and information sent by the airlines to the DOT. Additionally, the scope of the report looks at all facets of aviation including commercial air travel, air cargo, and private general aviation.

Read more in a [fact sheet on the forecast \(https://www.faa.gov/news/fact\\_sheets/news\\_story.cfm?newsId=22594\)](https://www.faa.gov/news/fact_sheets/news_story.cfm?newsId=22594) on our website.