

Commercial

## Online calculator helps startups decipher U.S. regulations

by Debra Werner

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Attorneys with Washington-based Aegis Space Law developed the Space Regulatory Calculator. Aegis attorneys also teach at the Association of Commercial Space Professionals Space Regulatory Bootcamp. Credit: Aegis Space Law

SAN FRANCISCO – Aegis Space Law is offering a free online calculator to help U.S. companies navigate the complex regulatory landscape.

The **Space Regulatory Calculator**, unveiled June 4, is designed to help early-stage space companies comply with space-related regulations from the Commerce Department, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Communications Commission, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and State Department.

“Aegis works with a lot of space startups,” Bailey Reichelt, Aegis Space Law partner and co-founder, told *SpaceNews* by email. “The common denominator is that they don’t see regulations as something they need to plan for until they’ve gotten the engineering and financing in order. Unfortunately, the regulatory timelines can be much longer than the other timelines.”

Founders should consider regulatory approval as soon as they begin designing space systems and raising money “to optimize the chances of that business succeeding,” said Reichelt, who developed the Space Regulatory Calculator with Aegis partner Will Lewis.

### Costly Mistakes

Failing to consider regulation early in the planning process can lead to costly and time-consuming mistakes. For example, a satellite company might select a foreign antenna array due to its price and ground-station compatibility without realizing that the operating frequency would impose “a lengthy and expensive regulatory burden,” Reichelt said.

In addition, Federal Acquisition Regulations pertaining to an existing contracts sometimes bar foreign-sourced components.

“This kind of setback happens all the time when you have no idea what regulations apply to you,” Reichelt said.

## Legal Advice

Traditionally, space companies have hired attorneys to determine which regulations applied to their work. Many new space companies cannot afford “the sophisticated legal advice needed to navigate this many agencies,” Reichelt said. “This leaves companies vulnerable to missteps that can cost time and money.” Regulatory missteps can even threaten the viability of the firm or its mission, she added.

It’s “entirely unreasonable for a company with no cash flow to spend tens of thousands of dollars on lawyers before they even have paid employees,” Reichelt said. “If we want the space industry to succeed — if we want the U.S. technology sector to continue leading innovation globally — we have to drive down legal and regulatory barriers across the board.

The Space Law Calculator is designed to help startups determine what kind of licenses and permits they will need, how long the approval process generally take and what expenses they are likely to incur to ensure regulatory compliance.

“A small business looking to launch its first satellite, for example, would see, among other things, that it may need to plan at least two years in advance to ensure required licenses are obtained prior to launch,” according to the news release.

Aegis attorneys plan to update the Space Regulatory Calculator as regulations change.

Attorneys with Washington-based Aegis Space Law helped establish the nonprofit Association of Commercial Space Professionals. In addition, Aegis attorneys teach at the Association’s [Space Regulatory Bootcamp](#).



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