



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS RELEASE

Vertical Aviation International Updates Bylaws to Reflect Industry Growth and Future Needs

New governance structure and membership categories adopted to strengthen the existing and evolving vertical aviation industry

Alexandria, VA (October 29, 2024) – Vertical Aviation International (VAI), the leading trade association representing vertical aviation industry, announces significant updates to its bylaws, reflecting the rapid growth and evolution of the sector. The new governance framework ensures that VAI remains an effective voice for the industry, both now and in the future.

"As the vertical aviation industry evolves, VAI's governance structure must also adapt," says Mark Schlaefli, VAI Board chair and owner of Dakota Rotors. "These bylaws changes are aimed at strengthening our ability to represent a diverse and growing membership, while also future proofing the association so that we can lead and support the vertical aviation community for decades to come."

The primary objective of the bylaw revision was to ensure that VAI's governance reflects the current and future needs of the expanding and diversifying vertical aviation industry. Through a consensus-driven and deliberative process, the Board of Directors (BoD) conducted a thorough review of the existing bylaws, resulting in updates that demonstrate a commitment to inclusive representation and governance practices, positioning the association to meet future challenges effectively.

The updates focus on two key areas: membership categories and the structure of the BoD.

Updated Membership Categories

The updated membership structure ensures that VAI reflects the growing diversity of the vertical aviation industry. The new categories are as follows:

- **Vertical Aircraft (VA) Operator Members**
This category includes both commercial/private operators and government service providers. It encompasses a broad range of vertical aviation operations, recognizing the increasing overlap in mission types within the industry.

Vertical Aviation International

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- **Honorary Members**

Honorary membership is awarded to individuals who have made significant contributions to the vertical aviation industry. This category includes recipients of the Salute to Excellence Lifetime Achievement Award, Hal Summers Award winners, past chairs, and former Presidents/CEOs of VAI. Honorary members are selected by the Board of Directors.

- **Manufacturer and Supplier Members**

This category is for companies that build, supply, or support vertical aviation operations, recognizing the critical role that manufacturers, suppliers and international organizations play in advancing the industry.

- **Individual Members**

This category includes vertical aviation pilots, mechanics/engineers, and other industry contributors, ensuring that individual professionals have a voice within the association.

Restructured Board of Directors

To better serve the needs of its members, VAI has also restructured its Board of Directors, expanding the board to 11 members. This change increases the representation of vertical aviation operators and ensures that all segments of the industry are included.

- **Nine Vertical Aviation Operator Commercial/Private Representatives**

These seats are allocated based on the size of an operator's fleet rather than the type of operations. By focusing on fleet size, VAI ensures that operators of all sizes have equal representation:

- Three seats for small operators (1-2 operational aircraft)
- Three seats for medium operators (3-6 operational aircraft)
- Three seats for large operators (7+ operational aircraft)

- **Two Vertical Aviation Operator Government Services Representatives**

These seats are reserved for representatives from government, military, and public service sectors, such as law enforcement, firefighting, search and rescue, and other critical missions. These operations differ significantly from commercial/private operators, and VAI has acknowledged this distinction in the board structure.



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"These bylaw updates mark an important step in VAI's commitment to remain a responsive and influential organization," adds Schlaefli. "We are confident that this new structure will empower VAI to provide the best advocacy, communications, education and networking opportunities for existing and future vertical aviation industry."

Board elections under the revised bylaws will take place at VAI's Annual General Meeting on March 11, 2025, at VERTICON.

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