NECA Regulatory Alert
FROM THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
September 3, 2026

New Tariffs on Foreign Produced Drones

President Donald Trump has issued a proclamation titled *Adjusting Imports of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and UAS Components into the United States*. The proclamation imposes tariffs on foreign-produced drones, components, and docking stations based on national security grounds.

Certain tariffs take effect on September 3, 2026, with the remainder taking effect in February of 2027.

The purpose of the new tariff rates is to crack down on perceived security vulnerabilities in the domestic and commercial drone fleet in use in the United States, particularly related to the Chinese Communist Party.

The Department of Commerce may provide relief to drone manufacturers if they submit and receive approval for plans to onshore drone manufacturing to the United States. Relief will only apply while construction is under way, with a maximum “shot clock” of 2029 to get new manufacturing facilities operational.

The tariff schedule has been broken down into three tiers:

Tier 1 – Tariff Rate of 100%, Effective September 3, 2026

- UAS with Maximum Takeoff Weight (MTOW) greater than or equal to 25kg;
- Any UAS with thermal imaging, regardless of weight;
- Docking stations for UAS, and parts of docking stations;
- Parts and components for UAS greater than 25kg, except for UAS used in retail delivery, agriculture, and those sold to the government for national security purposes;

A more detailed list can be found at Annex I.

Tier 2 – Tariff Rate of 25%, Effective September 3, 2026

- UAS with MTOW less than 25kg;
- No thermal imaging.

For the purposes of this tier, this lower rate only applies to the following codes from the Annex I list:

- 8806.21.00 - 8806.23.00
- 8806.91.00 - 8806.93.00

Tier 3 – Tariff Rate of 25%, Effective February 9, 2027

- All UAS parts and components imported for use that are not already captured under the Annex I list.
- If an article is covered by both the Annex I and Annex III list, only the Annex I tariff rate applies.

A more detailed list can be found at Annex III.

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Country of Origin Rate Caps

The following country of origin rates override any rate that would be set under the above tiers: An importer must certify that substantially all critical components and technologies originate in the United States or the listed countries.

15% Rate for the Following countries - Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, European Union Member States

In addition, there is a **10% rate cap for the United Kingdom.**

Next Steps

This is an emerging situation. We are engaging with industry partners and will keep you informed as the situation develops. Until then, keep lines of communications open with utilities, project owners, and general contractors to see how this will impact your projects and processes.