

15.7: DRONES AND PRIVACY

There are drones, and then there are drones. The military use of drones for both surveillance and as weapons has been around for some time now. According to the Council on Foreign Relations blog post by Micah Zenko on January 20, 2017 entitled **Obama's Final Drone Strike Data**, it is estimated that President Obama during his presidency as part of his counterterrorism efforts abroad, authorized 542 drone strikes that killed an estimated 3,797 people, including 324 civilians.

However, drones are now being used domestically and their use is expanding. One can find drones being sold online and at the mall. Farmers use them to survey their land. Various industries use them to inspect their facilities and equipment that is hard to reach. Amazon is considering using them to deliver packages. Hobbyists fly them for recreational purposes. The Federal Aviation Administration has rules for the flying model aircraft.

Fly under the Special Rule for Model Aircraft

To fly under the Special Rule for Model Aircraft you must:

- Fly for hobby or recreation ONLY
- Register your model aircraft
- Fly within visual line-of-sight
- Follow community-based safety guidelines and fly within the programming of a nationwide community-based organization
- Fly a drone under 55 lbs. unless certified by a community-based organization
- Never fly near other aircraft
- Notify the airport and air traffic control tower prior to flying within five miles of an airport^[1]
- Never fly near emergency response efforts

The law in NYS regarding the regulation of drones is mixed. NYC, Syracuse, and Orchard Park all have restrictions on the flying of drones within their municipality limits. With concerns regarding weaponized drones, their size, and use to violate the privacy rights of others, there is legislation being considered in NYS to address the use of drones.

In January 2018, the NYS Troopers deployed four unmanned drones in various locations throughout the state with plans to deploy another 14 by the end of the year. Official spokesman for the troopers stated that the drones will be used for emergency response, traffic safety, and other law enforcement missions. (Daily News, *New York State Police launching drones to aid in disaster response, traffic safety*, by Glenn Blain, January 11, 2018.)

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1. The person flying the model aircraft is responsible for contacting the airport directly. ↵

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