

## **Drone Users Group Network Safety Guidelines**

This document sets out the safety guidelines for the Drone Users Group Network community. Our goal with this document is to provide guidelines that are easy to follow, and that prioritize safety, while allowing people to enjoy the full recreational, artistic, educational, and scientific benefits of drone technology. A “drone” is a type of model aircraft, typically but not always a multi-rotor model, and often carries a camera.

### **1. General Guidelines**

Never fly your drone in a careless or reckless manner.

Never interfere with, and always give way to, any manned aircraft.

Do not fly your drone near major wildfires or other emergencies where manned traffic (such as air ambulances and water-drop aircraft) may be responding to the situation, without first coordinating with officials.

Before each flight, make sure your drone is in good operating condition with all propellers tightened and undamaged.

### **2. Novice pilots**

For your first two hours of flight time with your first drone, only fly in open areas, well away from people, buildings, and cars, and keep the drone below 200 feet above-ground-level and within 500 horizontal feet of yourself. Focus on learning how to fly with the camera pointed towards you, which will make it seem like the drone’s flight controls are reversed. (Very small “toy” drones may be flown indoors and count towards the two hours of flight time.) Consulting with an experienced drone user as you learn to fly is recommended but not required.

### **3. Distance offset**

Do not fly your drone closer than five feet laterally from spectators. (Very small “toy” drones may be flown closer with the consent of the spectator(s).)

### **4. Overflight of people**

Do not fly a drone weighing more than 4 pounds directly over an unprotected person other than yourself. For drones that weigh 4 pounds or less, do not fly directly over unprotected people who have not expressly consented to the overflight. Overflight should only be conducted once you are experienced with, and confident in, the equipment you are using. The duration of any overflight of unprotected people should be minimized.

### **5. Maximum Altitude**

Keep your drone below 400 feet above-ground-level (AGL) or below 400 feet above the top of a structure that you are flying over. In locations with sparse manned air traffic, and when visibility is excellent, you may exceed 400 feet AGL with the assistance of a spotter who continually scans the airspace in all directions to report to you any approaching air traffic.

### **6. Autonomous flight modes**

Autonomous or self-piloting flight modes (such as follow-me, waypoint navigation, and GPS-guided orbital flight paths) should only be engaged if there is an override ability. When using such modes in a location where there may be manned air traffic, you or an assistant must always maintain the ability to engage the override and resume direct control of the drone. Failsafe modes such as automatic return-to-home are exempt from this guideline.

## **7. Outdoor First Person View operations**

When flying outdoors, you must keep your drone within the distance limitation of your visual line of sight. Long-range FPV is not permitted. If wearing video goggles (or similar devices that block your view of the surrounding airspace) when flying outdoors, you must have another person act as a spotter to monitor the airspace for any manned air traffic and notify you about how to not interfere with and give way to any manned aircraft. However, if you keep your drone's flight below the top of nearby buildings, structures, or trees, or to very low altitudes such as a drone race course, you are not required to have a spotter to monitor the airspace. Flight through obstacle-filled environments (such as forests) while wearing goggles is permitted without a spotter provided that you ensure in advance that the location is clear of people.

## **8. Night operations**

Only fly your drone at night if the drone is equipped with lights sufficient for you to see the orientation and flight direction of the drone. Prior to your flight at night, check for obstacles that may not be easily seen in the dark.

## **9. Assistance in emergencies**

A DUGN member may assist fire departments and other emergency responders as a volunteer without compensation, and such activities to help people in need are considered to be within the programming of DUGN. Such assistance should always be subject to the supervision and direction of the incident commander or other official in charge of the emergency response. Do not fly your own rescue missions if there may be emergency responders using manned aircraft, or if your flight could distract the emergency workers on the ground.

## **10. Regulations**

These Safety Guidelines are independent from any regulatory or legal requirements for drone operation in your flight location. It is each drone user's responsibility to learn and comply with applicable laws.

**Safety is everyone's responsibility. As a member of the DUGN community, you are a representative of this technology to the public. A violation of any of these Safety Guidelines is grounds for termination of membership without refund.**

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## **A note on privacy**

DUGN urges members to respect privacy by avoiding or minimizing flight modes that may raise concerns, whether those concerns are justified or not. For example, persistent hovering, flights near windows,

flights at low altitude over residential properties, and following people or vehicles. These type of flight styles have the potential to be bothersome and to give people the wrong impression about how we use this technology.

*Updated: October 22, 2016*