

NCDOT Reminds Drone Pilots to Fly Safe and Legal

RALEIGH – Around 30,000 North Carolinians now own and operate drones for personal and recreational use. As this number grows, the N.C. Department of Transportation is reminding drone pilots to follow safety precautions because drones can be dangerous to others if they are not operated properly.

“Drones are an amazing new technology, and the applications are almost limitless,” said NCDOT Director of Aviation Bobby Walston. “But with something so new comes a lot of challenges. We need to make sure people don’t treat these as just a toy, and know how to operate them in a safe manner.”

As such, NCDOT’s Division of Aviation has provided the following eight tips to help pilots make sure they’re flying safely and legally:

- Always fly below 400 feet above ground level,
- Never fly near airports,
- Avoid flying over events or crowds,
- Don’t fly at night, even if your drone has lights,
- Never fly directly over people,
- Don’t fly near or above prisons,
- Respect people’s privacy, and
- Always keep the drone within your visual line of sight.

By following these guidelines, drone pilots can be more confident that their flights are safe and legal. Pilots should also take the time to learn about the [state](#) and [federal](#) laws governing drones, as well as local restrictions in their area, before taking off.

North Carolinians interested in flying a drone for commercial or government operations must obtain a permit from the N.C. Division of Aviation. Before applying, prospective users must pass NCDOT’s [UAS Knowledge Test](#). The permitting system began in 2016 and is designed to help drone owners better understand restrictions on drone use through a simple and efficient online process.