

Tips for Responsible Hobby or Recreational Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) or "Drones" on National Forest Systems Lands

Know where to fly

- Individuals and organizations may fly UAS for hobby or recreational purposes in compliance with the [Special Rule for Model Aircraft\(link is external\)](#)(Section 336 of Public Law 112-95).
- UAS must be flown below 400 feet and remain clear of surrounding obstacles.
- UAS are considered to be both "motorized equipment" and "mechanical transport" as such they cannot take off from, land in, or be operated from congressionally designated Wilderness Areas.
- UAS are not permitted to fly in areas that have "Temporary Flight Restrictions" (TFR) in place. You can search the FAA website for current TFRs by clicking [here\(link is external\)](#).
- Never fly your UAS over or in close proximity to any fire operation (wildfire or prescribed). UAS flights over fire operations disrupt aerial firefighting operations and create hazardous situations.
- The Forest Service regularly flies aircraft at low altitudes to perform natural resource management. It is the UAS Operator's responsibility to be aware of these flights and take the steps necessary to avoid them. Contact the local Ranger District Office or the FAA for scheduled flights in the area.

Protect Wildlife & the Environment

- Do not fly over congressionally designated Wilderness Areas or Primitive Areas as many people seek these places for the opportunities for solitude and quiet that they provide.
- Do not fly over or near wildlife as this can create stress that may cause significant harm, and even death. Intentional disturbance of animals during breeding, nesting, rearing of young, or other critical life history functions is not allowed unless approved as research or management.
- Follow state wildlife and fish agency regulations on the use of UAS to search for or detect wildlife and fish.
- Launch the UAS more than 100 meters (328 feet) from wildlife. Do not approach animals or birds vertically with the UAS.

Fly safely, Stay in control

- Keep your UAS within your visual line of sight at all times.
- Take lessons and learn to operate your UAS safely.
- Remain well clear of and do not interfere with manned aircraft operations.
- Fly your UAS at least 5 miles from an airport or backcountry airstrip.
- UAS should not be flown over or in close proximity to populated and noise-sensitive areas, such as campgrounds, trail heads, and visitor centers.
- Obey all privacy laws.

Follow Federal Aviation Association (FAA) guidelines

- Ensure that you comply with all FAA regulations and guidance for flying your UAS. The FAA has authority over all airspace. Information on FAA regulations is available [here\(link is external\)](#).
- Do not fly any aircraft weighing more than 55 pounds (total weight, including payload and fuel source).

From:

<https://www.fs.fed.us/science-technology/fire/unmanned-aircraft-systems/responsible-use>

State Drone Laws in Arizona

These are drone laws that apply to the entire state of Arizona, and were created by the Arizona State Legislature.

According to the [Arizona Department of Transportation](#) and the [Arizona State Legislature](#), Arizona has one state-wide law concerning the use of drones in the state.

SB 1449 // 2016

SB 1449 includes the following regulations concerning drones:

- UAS cannot interfere with police, firefighters, or manned aircraft.
- Flying a drone in “dangerous proximity” to a person or property is defined as Disorderly Conduct.
- UAS cannot fly within 500 feet horizontally or 250 feet vertically of any critical facility. These include but are not limited to oil and gas facilities, water treatment facilities, power plants, courthouses, military installations, and hospitals.
- Cities and towns in the state of Arizona that contain more than one park must allow drones in at least one of them.
- Cities and towns in Arizona are prohibited from creating their own drone laws. The Arizona State Legislature claims pre-emption for the creation of any regulations concerning drones.

There are many types of airspace restrictions in the United States. Below is a list of restrictions that commonly affect UAS flights, including:

- [Stadiums and Sporting Events](#)
- [Near Airports](#)
- [Security Sensitive Airspace Restrictions](#)
- [Restricted or Special Use Airspace](#)
- [Washington, DC](#)