

DRONE JOURNALISM CODE



The following is a code of conduct specific to the use of drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles, in journalism

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- 1 – The public has a right to know, but journalists must use common sense and compassion when determining what information and images will be released to the general public.
- 2 – Operators and their employers must follow all Transport Canada regulations.
- 3 – Privacy laws for a drone are no different than for traditional photography and must be adhered to at all times.
- 4 – A drone is a powerful tool and it must be treated as such. A drone should only be used to gather information pertinent to a given story. Drones should not be used to search for stories.
- 5 – If weather conditions are unsafe, the drone should not be launched regardless of how important the potential footage or images may be. The operator should be well aware of a craft's operational parameters.
- 6 – The drone should always be maintained to the utmost standards so that the risk to the public and property will always be at minimal levels.
- 7 – Before a drone is launched, the area of operation should be surveyed and the operator should determine what obstacles, if any, exist and whether those obstacles present a risk to safe operation.
- 8 – Before a drone is launched, the operator should determine safe landing zones in case the craft must be landed due to technical or weather related problems.
- 9 – Operators should decline to fly a drone if they are unable to take off and land in a safe zone away from the general public.
- 10 – At a scene, all emergency officials should be made aware that a drone will be in operation and the operator should work in conjunction with those officials to ensure no one is put at unnecessary risk.
- 11 – Before starting motors, announce: Starting Motors. Before take-off, announce: Taking off. Upon commencing landing, announce: Landing.
- 12 – Before an attempt is made to approach a scene and capture footage, the operator should put the drone through some basic maneuvers to ensure it is operating properly. If there is any indication that flight controls are not responding as per the craft's specifications, the drone should be landed immediately and repairs made.
- 13 – A drone will not be operated without the required level of liability insurance.
- 14 – A detailed log of each flight will be kept and reviewed after each flight to identify and encourage best practices.
- 15 – The drone will not be operated in controlled airspace.
- 16 – Drone operators must be properly trained in the operation of their craft.
- 17 – A drone operator should always remain within the limits of their craft and expertise regardless of how critical images or footage may be to an ongoing story.
- 18 – No drone shall be operated under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- 19 – If the operator is in First Person View (FPV) mode, an observer shall always be used during operations. The observer must be capable of taking control of the craft should the operator become incapacitated.
- 20 – If safety modes such as Return to Home are available to the operator, they should be employed during operations.
- 21 – Operations must be conducted as Line-of-Sight flights.