



DRONES HAVE LANDED IN THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY

Real Estate is the second largest industry for drone use, after aerial photography, which is easy to understand when viewing the compelling aerial photos and videos in use by many realtors today.

Drones are technically referred to as UAVs “Unmanned Aerial Vehicles” or when referring to the drone and ground controller unit, an “Unmanned Aircraft System” (UAS). Today, UAVs are very affordable, easy to operate and highly maneuverable. Though a pilot’s license was at one time necessary for commercial drone use, the FAA now allows operation with a remote pilot certificate ([FAA Section 107 regulations](#)).



HOW AND WHY DRONES BENEFIT THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY

Differentiating property listings by offering high-quality aerial photography and video is a hot button for realtors today. Statistics show that homes with aerial images sell 68 percent faster than houses that are marketed using standard photography. Here are 9 ways in which real estate agents and brokers are benefiting from drones:



1. Drone photography offers dramatic, captivating images.

Using modern drone technology allows real estate professionals to create exceptional shots easily. The use of GPS-programmed flight paths combined with automatic point-of-interest camera targeting results in professional and appealing views.



2. Drones are able to shoot engaging virtual tours.

A camera drone can fly throughout a home or office building and travel through each room, creating a detailed virtual tour that stationary photography is unable to capture. Today’s video editing software make it easy for agents to create a professional voice-over soundtrack, giving the potential buyer a rich and compelling visual story.



3. Drone photography is able to show enhanced features of the property.

Aerial photography can capture shots of landscaping, outdoor living areas, pools, hot tubs, walking paths, nearby parks, local schools, and other interesting features that potential buyers will want to see.



4. Drone photography is attractive to sellers and will generate new business for the real estate agent.

Using drone photography and videos to market properties is a huge selling point for prospective sellers, who want their property to be presented in best way possible.



5. Drones provide realtors a competitive edge.

Real estate listings with drone-produced images and video outperform listings that only offer traditional photos, resulting in increased sales for the agent.



6. Drones are a cost-effective alternative.

Drones are inexpensive to purchase and use. Or realtors can cost effectively outsource aerial photography to professional drone operators.



7. Drones offer high level impact for luxury homes.

Drone photography is able to highlight a waterfront view, spotlight a beautiful garden, expansive grounds, unique swimming pools or water features. Aerial drone photography is able to capture the elegance of a high-end property in a way that no other photography method can.



8. Drones offer advantages for commercial real estate and property development.

Drones are used to plan high rise apartments and other residential multi-unit projects. They are used to inspect, survey and market the property to potential buyers, and for aerial overviews of the land to be developed and surrounding neighborhoods.



9. Drones aid in roof and home inspections.

A drone allows inspectors to identify roof and other issues in ways that a ladder never would. Beyond offering a safer inspection solution, they can readily identify lifting shingles, bent flashing or chimney related issues.

RISK PROTECTION FOR REALTORS

While the risk of damage and injury is very low when it comes to drone photography, there are some risks involved. Every drone operator should carry commercial drone insurance. Most drone operators should consider both accidental and liability insurance. Many real estate companies require a minimum of a \$1 million limit of liability for third-party operators. There are several types of coverages applicable to drones, including:

- Drone Liability Insurance
- Hull Insurance (damage to the actual drone)
- Drone Payload Insurance
- Ground Equipment Insurance

Drone liability insurance protects the operator and company from third-party claims or property damage. Some policies may extend their insurance coverage to financial loss protection associated with negligence and invasion of privacy. Every realtor using drones should review their coverages to ensure they are protected when using this growing technology.

FAA regulations are constantly evolving with drone usage becoming more common. Staying on top of these changes to ensure clients are never left with an uncovered risk is paramount. For more information on drone insurance and risk protection, [contact Marsh & McLennan Agency](#). With over 5,000 colleagues in more than 75 office locations, MMA will help you determine the right insurance coverage for your needs.

CURRENT FAA REGULATIONS

All drones weighing more than a half pound (0.55 lbs.) are required to be registered with the FAA. The cost to register drones is only \$5, but the fine for using an unregistered drone can be \$25,000 per UAV. Current FAA guidelines include:

- No drones may be flown within 5 miles of an airport or terminal.
- Written permission is required from each person before drones can fly over or photograph them.
- Commercial drones are limited to an altitude of 400 feet.
- Drone pilots must remain in the line-of-sight of the drone they are operating at all times.
- All operators must secure a drone/UAV operator's license from the FAA.

Sources:

"Drones for Real Estate Marketing: Are They Worth It?" RISMedia, 22 Dec. 2016, rismedia.com/2016/12/20/drones-real-estate-marketing/.

<https://faadronezone.faa.gov>

[FAA Section 107 regulations](#)