



Spy Drones Over Your Kennel

What Can Be Done About Them?

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**Look! In the sky!
It's a bird... it's a plane...
it's a drone!**

Small unmanned aircraft called drones have been in the news quite a bit lately. Landing illegally on the White House lawn, running into jet planes, delivering parcels in suburbia. Using drones for surveillance on your own property is perfectly legal, making it a fun way to locate prey or nuisance animals (or maybe your own pets) on the farm or ranch.

But did you know that PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) are hawking their own drones, Air Angels, on their website? The product description reads "*The New Hobby for Animal Protectionists! PETA has come up with a drone program that can help protect animals from illegal hunting and other nasty pursuits, and you can be part of the action with an Air Angels drone!*" At \$325. each, anyone can become a spy.

In a press release, PETA said it would "monitor those who are out in the woods with death on their minds," using spotlights or feed lures, or

drinking alcohol while in possession of a firearm. PETA also intends to fly the remote-controlled aircraft over factory farms, fishing spots and "other venues where animals routinely suffer and die."

I talked briefly last weekend with Karen Strange, President of [MoFed](#), the Missouri Federation of Animal Owners, about legislation to regulate drone cameras on our private property. She says it's a complex issue, because we don't legally "own" the airspace over our property. In her state, she does expect legislators to attempt to create a bill (next session) to provide some privacy rights, but it will be challenged by law enforcement agencies, which are also eagerly adding drones to their arsenals.

In some states, legislation has been proposed or adopted to either ban the use of drones by law enforcement, or to require a search warrant. Some bills propose that no weapons be permitted on drones, that evidence collected on them may not be used in court if no warrant was issued, and that emergency use when life is endangered would be allowable without a warrant. Contact your elected officials to find out what bills have been proposed or passed to regulate drone use in your state.

The FAA (Federal Aviation Authority) does not currently require authorization for the private use of drones, and there are no laws regulating

what you do with your personal drone. They do publish strict **guidelines** for 'recreational or hobby' users and state unequivocally that "You must follow safety guidelines. Any other use requires FAA authorization."

Here are some of the key FAA guidelines. If you observe anyone using a drone without adhering to these guidelines, you can report them to the FAA:

- Fly no higher than 400'
- Keep your drone in eyesight at all times
- Do not intentionally fly over unprotected persons or moving vehicles
- Stay at least 25' away from people and property
- Do not fly within 5 miles of an airport
- Do not fly in adverse weather or high winds
- Do not fly under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Do not fly over sensitive infrastructure or property such as heavily traveled roadways, government facilities, correctional facilities, water treatment plants or power stations
- ***Check and follow all local laws and ordinances before flying over private property***
- ***Do not conduct surveillance or photograph persons in areas where there is an expectation of privacy without the individual's permission*** (emphasis ours)

From those guidelines, it appears that conducting surveillance with a drone should require prior authorization by the FAA, which sometimes can take up to 2 months to get. It also tells us that we may wish to work on getting local ordinances prohibiting drone surveillance or photography on private property without a permit.

The Academy of Model Aeronautics is quite clear in their regulations also: "PRIVACY PROTECTION SAFEGUARDS: The use of imaging technology for aerial surveillance with radio control model aircraft having the capability of obtaining high-resolution photographs and/or video, or using any types of sensors, for the collection, retention, or dissemination of surveillance data information on individuals, homes, businesses, or property at locations where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy is strictly prohibited by the AMA unless written expressed permission is obtained from the individual property owners or managers."

On the lighter side, several cases of drone shootings have also been in the news. Irritated hunters decided to take out the drone that was spying on them. I guess PETA didn't think about that when they decided to spy on armed hunters!

This has sparked a flurry of amusing anti-drone initiatives on social media, addressing drones both large and small. We'll share just a few:



Get a t-shirt at
[zazzle.com](https://www.zazzle.com)



And here's a great video of Epic Drone Crashes! Love the rescue effort in the last one!

