



**COLORADO**

**Department of Public Safety**

## **FAQ: Suspicious drone activity**

**Q: What constitutes suspicious drone behavior vs. normal, perfectly legal drone behavior?** It can be difficult to determine suspicious behavior. FAA rules require that drones:

- Fly below 400 feet.
- Only fly during the day, unless the operator has an FAA waiver.
- Avoid flying over groups of people, near stadiums and other aircraft.
- Fly within visual line of sight of the operator.
- Never fly within 5 miles of airports without explicit permission from airport authorities and air traffic control.
- Stay away from emergency response operations (such as wildfires), critical infrastructure and military sites.
- Follow all additional FAA airspace requirements, viewable at [faa.gov/go/uastfr](http://faa.gov/go/uastfr).

Drones operating outside these rules may be suspicious. If a drone is seen flying at night without lights, this might constitute suspicious behavior. Flights near or over critical infrastructure and military sites may be suspicious.

**Q: How can I tell the difference between a drone and other airborne objects, particularly commercial aircraft?**

**A:** During the day, it is relatively easy to tell the difference due to size and the ability to see the object. Drones are required to fly under 400 feet, so they will be much closer than aircraft.

At night it is very challenging, as the only thing visible are navigation lights and the human mind cannot easily determine how far away the lights are. This causes many lights in the sky, typically commercial aircraft, to be reported as drones. At night it is difficult to distinguish unless the drone flies directly overhead at low altitude. However, generally drone navigation lights will appear much larger than commercial aircraft lights because they are flying much lower to the ground. Lights in the sky similar in size to stars are most likely commercial aircraft.

**Q: What should I do if I see suspicious drone activity?**

**A.** Contact your local law enforcement. The activity may be legal and permissible, but we are investigating reports in order to ensure public safety. Please **DO NOT** attempt to take down any drones, and please do not confront drone operators.