



SPECIAL EVENTS DRONE HAZARD RESPONSE CHECKLIST

Unmanned aircraft can create immediate fire and EMS problems during major events even when they are not being used as weapons. A drone operating over a crowd, near a landing zone, above temporary structures, or within an incident area can interfere with aircraft operations, distract command, trigger crowd reaction, and create impact or fire hazards if it crashes or carries a payload. This checklist is intended to help fire service leaders and partner agencies build a coordinated process for identifying, reporting, evaluating, and managing drone-related hazards during major events.

- Identify who receives initial drone reports and who has authority to evaluate and act on them
- Establish a clear reporting process from field units to command, dispatch, law enforcement, and aviation partners
- Define what drone activity requires immediate command notification versus routine documentation
- Identify drone-sensitive areas such as landing zones, aircraft operating areas, dense crowds, temporary structures, fuel areas, and active incident scenes
- Establish immediate actions when a drone is observed near a landing zone, helicopter route, or low-altitude flight operation
- Build a process for delaying, rerouting, or suspending air operations when drone activity creates a hazard
- Preplan fire and EMS actions if a drone crashes into a crowd, tent, stage, vehicle, generator area, or other occupied space
- Establish procedures for suspicious payloads, dropped items, or drones that appear to be intentionally targeting people or infrastructure
- Coordinate with law enforcement on isolation, evidence preservation, and transfer of investigative control
- Ensure supervisors know who has responsibility for detection, reporting, investigation, public messaging, and consequence management



- Include drone hazards and drone reporting expectations in operational briefings
- Establish what information responders should capture, including location, direction of travel, altitude estimate, duration, proximity to crowds or aircraft, and any visible payload
- Prepare public messaging for drone-related disruptions to reduce confusion and rumor spread during the event
- Coordinate before the event with law enforcement, emergency management, aviation partners, and venue security so drone hazards are not managed ad hoc