IAMTCS
International Association of Medical Transport Communication Specialists

AIRSPACE SAFETY & STANDARDIZATION

OFFICIAL POSITION STATEMENT
ADOPTED · AIR MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS

Drone Awareness in Air Medical Communications

IAMTCS supports routine drone awareness as a standard element of air medical communication. Drone activity is now part of the modern airspace environment—not an edge case.

Public-safety agencies across the nation are increasingly using drones for operational missions. Because timely communication is essential to safe mission planning and execution, **drone awareness belongs in everyday comm-center practice.**

AIRSPACE RISK PROFILE & DATA ANALYSIS

2.4M
Projected U.S. small-UAS fleet across public & private sectors.
FAA PROJECTION

6,117
Near-encounter reports between manned and unmanned aircraft, 2014–2018.
FAA / NAS

20%
Of validated sighting reports documented high-risk close approaches under 500 ft.
SIGHTING STUDY

6
Near-midair collisions (NMACs) confirmed within studied tracking windows.
CONFIRMED NMACS

STANDARD DISPATCH SAFETY SCREEN QUESTION

"Are you aware of any drone activity at the scene?"

IAMTCS supports asking 911 call-takers this precise question as part of the standard safety screen—a routine part of call intake whenever it may affect an air medical response.

A helipad response procedure

IAMTCS supports a defined policy for agencies that manage helipads when a drone is sighted near a pad—covering immediate notification, scene assessment, coordination with pilots and dispatch, and local escalation pathways when activity could affect takeoff, landing, or hover operations.

Who initiates drone activity

Drone activity may come from hobbyists, public agencies, law enforcement, transportation departments, or commercial operators—and may affect the safety of scene access, landing zones, patient movement, and helicopter routing.

> **A practical safety measure, not a restriction on lawful drone use.** Its purpose is to improve shared situational awareness and reduce avoidable risk.

CITED SOURCES & DOCUMENTATION

- **FAA Fleet Projections** — "By 2025, the FAA predicts the sUAS fleet to number nearly 2.4 million units."
- **NIST Public-Safety Study** — PSCR Division survey on how drones (UAS) are currently used in public-safety operations.
- **Operational Prevalence** — "Public safety agencies across the nation are increasingly using drones for public safety applications."
- **Sighting Sample** — Preliminary analysis of 1,317 FAA UAS sighting reports, July 1 2020 – March 31 2021.
- **Proximity Limits** — Close approaches occurred in 20% (241/1,235) of reports; UAS within ~500 ft of an aircraft in flight.
- **Evasive Maneuvers** — Nine incidents required evasive maneuvers; six reported Near-Midair Collisions (NMACs).
- **Historical Baseline** — FAA recorded 6,117 near-encounter reports between manned and unmanned aircraft, 2014–2018.
- **Class D / Helicopter Focus** — Near-miss incidents are a concern in Class D airspace, which often includes GA and helicopter operations.