

Source: <https://www.casa.gov.au/standard-page/remotely-piloted-aircraft-emergency-situations>

Remotely piloted aircraft in emergency situations

Remotely piloted aircraft (RPA), commonly referred to as drones, are becoming increasingly popular, particularly those fitted with camera equipment, which allow both professional and amateur operators to capture aerial footage like never before.

While the vast majority of operators fly safely, as the popularity of drones increases, so too does the likelihood of them being flown when it's not safe to do so.

This applies especially to emergency situations such as bushfires, floods, traffic accidents and other events that might tempt people to fly drones when they shouldn't.

Bushfires - 'If you fly, they can't'

Never fly a drone, model aircraft or multicopter near bushfires. While it might be tempting to record footage, you can pose a major safety risk to firefighting personnel in the air and on the ground.

Even a small drone can represent a safety risk to manned aircraft. Due to this risk, firefighting aircraft can be grounded if other unauthorised aircraft are spotted near firefighting operations.

Firefighters on the ground also depend on aerial support to help suppress and contain fires. By flying your drone, you not only put their lives in danger, but also the lives of the people and property they're trying to protect.

Aircraft - both manned and unmanned - that are not coordinated through the state or territory fire authority are requested to remain clear of aerial firefighting operations.

CASA is working closely with state and territory firefighting services and the National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) to help raise awareness around the dangers of drone operators flying near bushfire-affected areas.

Floods, traffic accidents and other emergency situations

There are countless other instances where flying your drone might make the situation worse for all those involved. The efforts of emergency services in situations like floods, traffic accidents, police operations and search and rescue activities often incorporate aircraft for aerial support.

During these operations, emergency services are often stretched to capacity and cannot afford to be disrupted by unauthorised aircraft of any kind, including drones.

Flying with control?

As well as the restrictions on flying near bushfires or other emergency operations, safety regulations apply to flying drones for recreation detailed in the [Civil Aviation Safety Regulations](#) (CASR) subparts 101.

You can also [download this safety information](#) as a pamphlet:



[‘Firebombing is tough enough’ poster](#)



[‘Don't go there’ RPA bushfire brochure](#)



[‘Flying your drone for fun?’ brochure](#)

Resources

- [National Aerial Firefighting Centre - NAFC](#)

State and territory fire authorities

- [New South Wales Rural Fire Service - RFS](#)
- [Australian Capital Territory Rural Fire Services - ACTRFS](#)
- [Victoria Country Fire Authority - CFA](#)
- [Queensland Fire and Emergency Services - QFES](#)
- [Tasmania Fire Service - TFS](#)
- [South Australian Country Fire Service - CFS](#)
- [Western Australia Department of Fire and Emergency Services - DFES](#)
- [Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Services - PFES](#)