

No, Drone mitigation laws don't need to change.

Here's why:



By Linda Ziemba

A lot has changed in the last five years, but some things have not. Let me explain: When I started my company in 2015 it was called 'Drone Go Home'. The focus was to help combat the drone threats I witnessed all around me with technology to block unauthorized

drones from entering a configured virtual electronic "no fly zone."

Given my background in web security, I envisioned a system modeled on Intrusion Prevention Systems designed to protect against threats. What seemed like

an ethical hack for the greater good of public safety turned out to violate Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and Department of Justice (DOJ) regulations. Spoiler alert: these regulations have not changed...

The big pivot

After many sleepless nights digesting the regulations, I realized that staying the course and hoping the laws might change could land me and my clients in jail and/or with significant fines. In reality it was unlikely that I would live long enough to see three federal agencies agree to change aviation and privacy laws (FAA, FCC and DOJ).

Also, I started to understand that to take a drone out of the sky (FAA) can actually be more dangerous than the offending drone itself. The flying machine can inadvertently cause injury or property damage in the process -or worse. And that would be a whole other legal battle to fight. So 'Drone Go Home' became AeroDefense and a mitigation tool became a drone detection tool that does not violate FAA, FCC, or DOJ regulations by design.

Drones for everyone!

It is wild that anyone can go to their local Costco or login to Amazon and purchase a drone. They are exceedingly popular gifts. It didn't take long for the high accessibility of drones to spawn to two kinds of threats: threats from nefarious actors and threats from clueless/careless hobbyist -drone pilots.

Some emerging threats from nefarious actors include drones used for surveillance to plan attacks, to aid in cyber attacks, or physical assaults with weapons/explosives attached. Hobbyist threats – drone pilots losing control of their devices or

flying in or around restricted areas like airports – remain mostly unchanged but steady. You might think these kinds of incidents would decrease because of the FAA's education tools for hobbyists, but unfortunately that has not been the case.

Answering the call, some too quickly

Today there are over 500 drone detection and mitigation products due to the high threat level drones introduce across several industries. Some vendors, in their eagerness to get to market, developed technologies that violate one or more of the regulations mentioned previously.

Buyers hesitate when they don't fully understand the regulations and how they apply to the technology they want. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), FCC, DOJ, and FAA recently issued an advisory guidance on the legal use of mitigation and detection technologies to help clear the air. The guidance reminds that mitigation techniques, designed to take a drone out of the sky at all costs, are available only to the Departments of Defense, Energy, Justice and Homeland Security. This is for good reason. Operators of mitigation systems who are overzealous or not highly trained could cause property damage or serious injury to innocent bystanders. The risk is not worth it for non-militaristic scenarios — especially since you don't always know if the pilot is nefarious. However, some private entities are still calling for mitigation authority.

What they may not realize is that there are fixed and mobile drone detection solutions available today that offer a much safer form of mitigation and do not require prior legal authorization.

The best and safest form of mitigation

Drone detection technology that locates the drone and pilot simultaneously, often before the drone even takes off, allows security teams to prevent or disrupt drone incursions and offer the pilot education or a pair of handcuffs. When permanently installed, this kind of technology enables you to apprehend nefarious actors conducting test flights and block/foil criminal acts before they happen.

If you are considering drone mitigation/detection systems, the choice is relatively clear — unless, of course, you want to potentially land yourself in jail or in debt. You can take a proactive approach with legal drone detection technologies available now; or you can wait for something bad to happen; or for the laws to change. I definitely won't be sitting there waiting with you.

Linda Ziemba is AeroDefense's founder and CEO. AeroDefense developed the first drone detection device recognized by the Department of Homeland Security Support Anti-Terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies (SAFETY) Act. The company can be reached at: 732.284,3853 and AeroDefense.tech.