



DRONE SURVEILLANCE

What are drones?

A drone is an unmanned aircraft vehicle (UAV) with cameras that can record images, videos and audio.

Drones have many beneficial uses, including search-and-rescue missions, scientific research, mapping and more. But when deployed without proper regulation, drones equipped with facial recognition software, infrared technology and speakers capable of monitoring personal conversations can cause unprecedented invasions of our privacy rights. Interconnected drones could enable mass tracking of vehicles and people across wide areas. Tiny drones could go completely unnoticed while peering into the window of a home or a place of worship. With this new technology, traditionally private spaces like doctor's offices, courtrooms and even bathrooms are open for surveillance.

What are the current laws?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) currently limits where and when drones can fly. However, there are no state laws restricting law enforcement from using drone surveillance on citizens. In Minnesota, law enforcement can do drone surveillance without a warrant. If the police cannot go into your house without a warrant, why should they be able to record you without a warrant?

What can we do?

Support HF 3009/ SF 3074.

Minnesota lawmakers cannot allow this gap in legislation to exist. Police must get a search warrant before using drone surveillance.

Contact Julia Decker, policy director, at jdecker@aclu-mn.org or 952-240-6528 for more information about the ACLU-MN's work.



DRONE SURVEILLANCE

How is drone surveillance harmful?

It is uncomfortable to know someone is watching you, let alone that law enforcement could be watching you without a warrant. Technology can replicate human error on a massive scale. For example, facial recognition raises racial profiling concerns – the software is trained to see people of color as threats. While technological innovations are exciting, it is important to recognize their risks and to protect citizens' privacy. As technology continues to innovate, we have to change our laws to keep pace

Who is affected?

Everyone. Unchecked drone surveillance infringes on every citizen's right to privacy.

29 public safety agencies use drones in Minnesota as of May 2018.

Anoka County Sheriff
Big Lake Police Department
Clay County Sheriff
Dakota County Sheriff
Douglas County Sheriff
Duluth Fire Department
Freeborn County Sheriff
Goodhue County Sheriff
Hamel Fire Department
Hennepin County Sheriff's Office
Hubbard County Sheriff

Marshall County Sheriff
Morrison County Sheriff
Nicollet County Sheriff
Otter Tail County Sheriff
Owatonna Police Department
Perham Fire Department
Pipestone County Sheriff
Polk County Sheriff
Renville County Sheriff
Rochester Police Department
St. Cloud Police Department

Stearns County Sheriff's Office
Washington County Sheriff
Willmar Police Department
Windom Police Department
Winona County Sheriff
Wright County Sheriff

Source: Center for the Study of
Drones at Bard College, May 2018.

Contact Julia Decker, policy director, at jdecker@aclu-mn.org or 952-240-6528 for more information about the ACLU-MN's work.