



Drone / Unmanned Aircraft System Rules for State Capitol Campus

Q: What do the rules do?

A: The drone / unmanned aircraft system (UAS) rules prohibit launching, landing or operating drones / UAS on the Capitol Campus. This includes drones as well as remote-control model aircraft flown for recreational and business purposes ([Chapter 200-250 Washington Administrative Code](#)).

Q: What is the Department of Enterprise Services' role in managing the state Capitol Campus in Olympia?

A: Under [state law](#), the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) is responsible for the stewardship, preservation, operation and maintenance of the 486-acre state Capitol Campus. This includes adopting rules to keep the Campus safe for everyone.

Q: What does the Capitol Campus encompass?

A: The Campus includes:

- Centennial, Heritage, Marathon and Sylvester parks
- The 260-acre Capitol Lake reservoir
- The capitol, legislative and judicial buildings
- Governor's mansion
- More than 15 state agency office buildings and other public structures
- 18 public monuments and works of art

Q: Why do we need these drone / unmanned aircraft system rules?

A: DES adopted the rules because drones / UAS constitute a potential threat to public health and safety on our Campus. Public safety concerns include:

- Potential public safety risks for people below or in the flight path of a drone / UAS.
- Risk of interfering with emergency response activities on Capitol Campus.
- Potential disruption of state business by drone / UAS activity.

About 500,000 people visit the state Capitol Campus annually. This includes:

- 25,000 school children on tours
- People attending about 630 Campus events
- People participating in the legislative, judicial and executive processes
- Visitors attending different public events nearly every day – including evenings, weekends and holidays

In addition, some 7,000 people who work and conduct public business on the Campus including state elected officials, members of the Washington Legislature and their staff.

Q: Do these rules apply outside the Olympia Campus?

A: The rules apply only to the Capitol Campus in Olympia, which includes our four parks and Capitol Lake.

Q: Do the rules apply inside Campus buildings as well?

A: The rules apply to all of the Capitol Campus, including the inside of every building and structure.

Q: Are there any exceptions under the rules?

A: The rules do not restrict drone use by emergency first responders to incidents such as building fires, immediate criminal and health threats, oil spills to state waters and hazardous material releases. The rules also allow DES to consider the use of drones for activities directly related to the care of the Capitol Campus – but only with the prior written approval of the DES Director. DES would also have to seek permission from the Federal Aviation Administration to operate a drone on the Campus for business uses.

Q: Who will enforce the drone rules?

A: DES has a contract with the Washington State Patrol (WSP) to provide Capitol Campus security. DES and WSP also will coordinate closely with the Federal Aviation Administration as appropriate.

Q: What will the penalties / charges be for violating the drone / UAS rules?

A: It will depend on the nature and circumstances of a violation. The response could range from a warning to a civil complaint or even criminal charges if someone operating a drone is putting people in harm's way, damages Campus property or physically hurts someone with their drone / UAS.