

Have you noticed that some of our recent cathedral videos include drone footage? St. Paul's recently acquired a drone, which can be used both for publicity and for up-close facilities inspections. There have been a couple of questions about our use of a drone, so this document explains **what kind of drone we use, why it is legal, and how we make sure it is flown safely.**

What Kind of Drone Is This?

- Our drone weighs **less than 250 grams** (about half a pound).
- Because it is very lightweight, the FAA places it in the **lowest risk category** of drones.
- These drones are still considered aircraft, but they have **fewer paperwork and technology requirements** due to their size and safety profile.

Bottom line: This type of drone is legal to fly and designed to be especially safe when used responsibly.

Is the Drone Legal to Fly?

Yes.

Because it weighs under 250 grams:

- **FAA registration is not required** for recreational use.
- **Remote ID is not required** for recreational use.

These exemptions exist because very small drones pose **much lower risk to people and property.**

What Safety Rules Do We Follow?

Even though this drone requires less paperwork, **all FAA safety rules still apply**, and we follow them fully.

We always:

- Fly **only for recreational or demonstration purposes**
 - Keep the drone **within visual line of sight**
 - **Yield to manned aircraft** at all times
 - Fly **no higher than 400 feet** in allowed airspace
 - Use FAA tools (LAANC or DroneZone) if authorization is ever required
 - Never fly in a way that could endanger people or aircraft
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Why Small Drones Are Safer

Sub-250-gram drones are widely considered safer because:

- Their **very low weight** greatly reduces injury risk
 - They are **easier to control**, especially at low speeds
 - They are ideal for **responsible, low-risk flying**
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Built-In Safety Technology

Our drone includes multiple layers of built-in safety features:

- **No-Fly Zones:**
 - The drone software prevents flight near airports, military bases, and other restricted areas
 - The drone will **not even take off** in restricted airspace
- **Automatic Warnings & Return-to-Home:**

- If the drone approaches a restricted area, it issues a warning and safely returns home
 - **Obstacle Avoidance:**
 - The drone uses advanced sensing technology to avoid collisions (LIDAR)
 - It is designed to be extremely difficult to crash under normal conditions
 - **Altitude Limiting:**
 - The software is locked to a **maximum height of 400 feet**, in line with FAA rules
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Operator Experience & Training

- The drone is operated by trained individuals with experience flying larger drones
 - Ty, our current operator:
 - Previously held FAA certification to fly heavier drones
 - Applies the same professional safety standards to this smaller drone
 - Is actively working to renew certification, even though it is **not required** for this drone
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Extra Safety Measures We Take

- We voluntarily maintain FAA registration through a DJI account, even though this drone does not require it
 - We never fly in high winds or unsafe conditions
 - The drone is so stable and impact-resistant that no warranty was offered by the manufacturer
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In Summary

-  The drone is **legal**
-  It is **extremely small and low-risk**
-  It includes **multiple built-in safety systems**
-  It is flown by **experienced operators**
-  It fully complies with **FAA safety rules**

Our goal is safe, responsible, and respectful drone use at all times.