



An Extended Guide · No. 2062

Drones on the Farm

Roof checks, field scouting,
and the pilot rules

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A drone around the farm

A small drone can save you a lot of climbing and a lot of walking. Check the roof without the ladder, scout a back field without the mud, look the fence line over without the drive, find where the cattle wandered off to — all from a screen in your hand. It's a genuinely useful tool. There are also rules about flying one, and it's worth knowing them up front.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. For 30-plus years I've helped folks get comfortable with new gadgets without the overwhelm. This guide is me walking the property with you, talking through the handy things a drone can do and the rules that come with the privilege of flying one.

We'll cover the practical uses first, because that's the fun part. Then we'll walk carefully through the FAA's rules — registration, the two kinds of flying, the certificate your own farm use may require — because getting those right keeps you legal and keeps everyone safe. I'll be plain about where the lines are and where to check the current rules yourself.

★ No wrong question here

If you'd like someone to help you get a drone set up, registered, and pointed at the right FAA steps, that's exactly the kind of thing I help with. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 — I'm a tech helper, not the FAA, so I'll help you find the official answers, not guess at them.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you understand both the uses and the rules.

- ❑ A drone is great for roof checks, field scouting, fence-line and stock checks, and after-storm damage looks.
- ❑ A drone over 250 grams must be registered with the FAA — it's \$5 and good for three years.
- ❑ Flying purely for fun is recreational; you pass the free TRUST test and carry proof when you fly.
- ❑ The moment you fly for your farm business — scouting your own crops, say — it's generally NOT recreational and needs a Part 107 certificate.
- ❑ Registered drones must broadcast Remote ID; keep the drone under 400 feet and always in your sight.
- ❑ Rules change, so check the current ones at faa.gov/uas, and stay clear of people, power lines, aircraft, and airports.

✓ The question that decides the rules

Ask yourself: am I flying for fun, or is this helping my farm business? That one honest answer decides whether you need the free TRUST test or the Part 107 certificate. When in doubt, lean toward Part 107.

The handy things a drone can do

Let's start with why you'd want one at all, because the practical uses around a property are real and they add up fast.

A roof check without the ladder

Instead of climbing up to look at the roof, the gutters, or the top of a silo, you fly up and look from the screen. For anyone who'd rather keep both feet on the ground — and that's most of us past a certain age — this alone can be worth it. You see the shingles, the flashing, the storm damage, all without the risk of the climb.

Scouting a field or fence line

A drone covers ground fast. You can look over a crop for trouble spots, run the fence line without walking it, or check a far pasture in minutes from the barnyard. It's a set of eyes that go where your boots would rather not.

Finding stock and checking after a storm

When an animal's gone missing or a storm's rolled through, a quick flight tells you a lot in a hurry — where the cattle drifted, which trees came down, whether the back building took damage. It turns a long, worried walk into a short look.

✓ Eyes where boots don't want to go

The real gift of a drone on a farm is reach: it goes up, out, and over without you climbing, walking, or driving. For checking things that are high, far, or just plain inconvenient, nothing beats it.

Why the rules are worth getting right

Before the specifics, a word on why any of this matters. The rules aren't red tape for its own sake.

A drone shares the sky with real aircraft — crop dusters, medical helicopters, small planes out of the local strip. It can also fall, and a falling drone near a person or a road is no small thing. The FAA's rules exist to keep the drone, the people below, and the aircraft above all out of each other's way. Following them isn't just about staying legal; it's about nobody getting hurt.

There's a legal side too. Flying outside the rules can bring real penalties, and if something goes wrong while you're flying improperly, the liability lands squarely on you. The rules are clear enough that staying on the right side of them is entirely doable — which is the whole point of this guide.

! Rules change — check the current ones

The FAA's drone rules evolve over time. Everything in this guide is accurate as I write it, but before you fly, check the current rules yourself at faa.gov/uas. Type that address in yourself, the way you would any official site.

Registering your drone with the FAA

This is the first rule, and the simplest. Most drones worth owning need to be registered, and it's an easy, cheap step.

A drone that weighs more than 250 grams — a little over half a pound, which covers most camera drones — must be registered with the FAA before you fly it. Registration costs \$5 and is good for three years. You do it through the FAA, and once it's done you mark your registration number on the drone so it can be identified.

That's genuinely all there is to the registration itself. It's not a test and it's not hard — it's a small fee and a few minutes. The weight is the thing to check: very small toy-size drones under that 250-gram line may not need registration for recreational flying, but most drones with a real camera are over it and do.

✓ Check the weight first

The 250-gram line is the one to know. Most camera drones are over it and need registering; the tiniest toys may not. When in doubt, assume it needs registering — \$5 for three years is cheap peace of mind.

The two kinds of flying

Here's the heart of the whole thing, and the part folks most often get wrong. The FAA treats flying for fun differently from flying for business.

Recreational — flying for fun

If you're flying purely for enjoyment — buzzing around the yard, taking a pretty picture of the sunset for no reason but that it's pretty — that's recreational flying. For that, beyond registering the drone, you pass a free online test called TRUST and carry proof that you passed it when you fly. TRUST is short, it's free, and it's meant to make sure you know the basic safety rules.

Business — flying that helps your work

The moment your flying is in furtherance of a business, it's generally no longer recreational — and that includes your own farm business. Scouting your own crops, inspecting your own property to decide on a repair or an insurance claim, checking your own fence for your operation: the FAA generally treats that as business flying, even though it's your land and your drone.

! Your own farm counts as business

This is the surprise that catches good people out. Flying to help your farm — even your own land, even just to decide whether to fix the roof — is generally business flying, not recreational. That means it generally needs the Part 107 certificate we'll cover next.

The Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate

If your flying helps your farm business, this is the credential the FAA generally wants you to have. It sounds formal, but it's within reach.

A Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate is the FAA's license for flying a drone for business. To get it, you study the rules and pass an FAA knowledge test covering airspace, weather, safety, and how to fly responsibly. Once you hold it, you're cleared to use your drone for your farm work the right way — and you keep it current as the FAA requires.

A lot of farmers are surprised to learn their everyday drone use counts as business, but many go on to get the certificate precisely because it opens the door to using the drone for real work without worry. The studying takes some effort, but plenty of ordinary folks pass it, and there are courses that walk you through exactly what's on the test.

✓ When in doubt, go for Part 107

If you're unsure whether your flying counts as business, the safe and simple answer is to get the Part 107. It covers you for both kinds of flying and takes the guesswork out. For regular farm use, most folks are better off with it than without.

Remote ID, height, and keeping it in sight

A few flying rules apply no matter why you're up. These are the ones to burn into memory.

Remote ID. A registered drone must broadcast Remote ID — think of it as a digital license plate the drone sends out while it flies, so it can be identified from the ground. Most current drones handle this automatically, but it's a requirement, not an option, for registered drones.

Under 400 feet. Keep the drone below 400 feet above the ground. That ceiling keeps you well clear of where crewed aircraft normally fly. There's rarely a good reason on a farm to go higher anyway — the view from 400 feet is plenty for a roof or a field.

In your sight. Keep the drone where you can see it with your own eyes the whole time it's flying — not just on the screen. If it drifts behind the barn or over the tree line where you lose sight of it, you've crossed a line. A spotter standing with you helps on a bigger property.

! These limits keep the sky safe

Remote ID, under 400 feet, and always in sight aren't suggestions — they're how a drone and real aircraft stay out of each other's way. Treat them as hard rules every single flight, fun or business.

Flying safely around the place

Beyond the FAA's rules, plain good sense keeps a drone from causing trouble. A few habits make every flight a safe one.

Stay well clear of people. A drone can fall, and a spinning propeller is no joke, so never fly directly over anyone — not a crew in the field, not a grandchild in the yard, not folks on a nearby road. Give people a wide berth and you take the worst risk off the table.

Power lines are the sneaky hazard. They're hard to see against the sky and they'll snatch a drone right out of the air — and starting a fire or an outage is a serious matter. Know where your lines run and keep the drone well away from them. The same care goes for trees, buildings, and anything else it could tangle in.

! Stay clear of aircraft and airports

A crewed aircraft always has the right of way — if you see or hear a plane or helicopter, bring your drone down and let it pass. And flying near an airport has its own strict rules; if you're anywhere near one, check what's allowed before you fly. Never, ever fly over a wildfire or an emergency scene.

Two kinds of places, two sets of needs

What a drone's good for — and which rules bite — depends on whether you've got a small place or a working farm, and on why you're flying.

If your place is close to town

A smaller lot usually means flying for your own home — checking your roof and gutters, taking a look after a storm. But watch the airspace, since town can put you nearer an airport.

- A roof-and-gutter check without the ladder is a fine, low-risk use.
- If it's purely for your own home and not a business, recreational rules and the TRUST test may be enough.
- Being nearer town can mean being nearer an airport — check the airspace before you fly.
- Keep well clear of neighbors, roads, and the folks next door.

If you're out on acreage or a working farm

A working farm has the most to gain from a drone — and is the clearest case where flying counts as business. More land means more sky to mind, too.

- Scouting crops, fences, and stock across the acreage is a real time-saver.
- Because it helps your farm business, this flying generally needs the Part 107 certificate.
- More land can mean losing sight of the drone — keep it in view, and use a spotter.
- Know where your power lines and any nearby airstrips are before you launch.

★ Not sure which rules apply to you?

Tell me what you'd actually use the drone for, and I'll help you figure out whether you're looking at recreational rules or Part 107, and point you to the official FAA steps. Call (330) 200-8042.

Getting started, the right order

Doing this in order keeps you legal and saves backtracking. Here's the honest sequence.

- **Decide why you'll fly** — honestly: just for fun, or to help your farm? That sets which rules apply.
- **Register the drone** if it's over 250 grams — \$5, good three years, and mark the number on it.
- **Get the right credential** — the free TRUST test for recreational flying, or study for the Part 107 if it's business.
- **Make sure Remote ID is on** — most current drones broadcast it automatically; confirm yours does.
- **Learn your airspace** — check faa.gov/uas and whether any airport sits near where you'll fly.
- **Start small and low** — practice in an open spot, well away from people and lines, before you count on it.

★ I'll help you work the list

The setup, the registration, confirming Remote ID, and finding the right FAA pages are all things I can sit with you and work through. The flying is yours to learn; getting you ready to fly legally is where I help. Call (330) 200-8042.

Privacy and good-neighbor sense

A camera in the sky makes some folks uneasy, and out in the country where everyone knows everyone, that matters. A little courtesy goes a long way.

Keep your flying over your own property and your own business. Don't hover over a neighbor's yard, peer at their house, or give anyone reason to think you're watching them. Beyond being neighborly, prying with a drone can cross legal lines in ways that vary by place — so the simple rule is to keep your eyes on your own land.

If a neighbor asks what you're up to, a friendly answer — checking my roof, looking at my back field — usually settles it. People are mostly curious, not hostile, and a plain word keeps the peace. The farmer who flies openly and considerately rarely has trouble.

✓ Fly like the neighbors are watching

Because out here, they are. Keep the drone over your own ground, be ready to say plainly what you're doing, and you'll keep both the law and the neighbors on your side.

Weather, wind, and battery sense

A drone is a light thing in a big sky, and the weather has a real say in whether it flies well. A little judgment keeps it out of trouble.

Wind is the big one. A gusty day can push a small drone around, drain its battery fast as it fights to hold steady, and make it hard to control — and open farm country gets plenty of wind. When it's really blowing, the smart move is to wait for a calmer hour. Rain and cold are hard on drones too; most aren't built to fly wet, and cold shortens the battery.

Speaking of battery: watch it closely and bring the drone home with power to spare, never on the last few percent. A drone that runs out of battery in the air comes down wherever it happens to be, and that's how good drones get lost or broken. Land early rather than pushing your luck.

✓ Land with charge in the tank

Don't fly the battery to empty. Bring it back while there's comfortable charge left, so a surprise gust or a longer-than-planned look home doesn't leave you watching it drop into the back forty.

What a drone won't do for you

A drone is a wonderful tool, but it's honest to be clear about its limits so you're not disappointed.

A drone shows you things; it doesn't fix them. It'll spot the missing shingle, but someone still has to get up and replace it. It'll find the break in the fence, but the fence still needs mending. Think of it as the best pair of eyes you've ever had, not a hand that does the work.

It also won't replace a professional's judgment on a big call. A drone look at a roof is great for noticing trouble, but for an insurance claim or a real repair decision, a qualified roofer or inspector should still have the final word. Use the drone to know where to look; let the pro tell you what it means.

✓ Great eyes, not a repairman

Let the drone do what it's brilliant at — seeing the high, far, and awkward — and leave the fixing and the final judgment to the people and tools meant for it. That's the sweet spot.

Common mistakes to sidestep

A handful of avoidable slip-ups cause most of the trouble folks get into with drones. Now you'll see them coming.

- **Assuming your own land means no rules** — flying to help your farm is generally business flying and needs Part 107.
- **Skipping registration** for a drone over 250 grams — it's \$5 and required, so there's no reason to skip it.
- **Flying out of sight**, behind the barn or over the trees, where you can't see the drone with your own eyes.
- **Getting too close to power lines**, which are hard to see and will snatch a drone right down.
- **Not checking the current rules** at faa.gov/uas, since they change and old advice can lead you wrong.

! The mistake that catches good people

Believing that flying over your own farm is 'just for fun' is the slip that trips up the most honest folks. If it helps your operation, the FAA generally calls it business — so plan on Part 107.

A simple pre-flight checklist

Run through these before you launch, every time. It becomes second nature fast and keeps you safe and legal.

- ☐ My drone is registered if it's over 250 grams, with the number marked on it.
- ☐ I have the right credential — TRUST for fun, Part 107 for farm business — and proof with me.
- ☐ Remote ID is on and working.
- ☐ I've checked the current rules and airspace at [faa.gov/uas](https://www.faa.gov/uas).
- ☐ The weather and wind are reasonable, and my battery is charged.
- ☐ I'm clear of people, power lines, and any nearby airport.
- ☐ I can keep the drone in my sight and under 400 feet the whole flight.

★ Want help building the habit?

A good pre-flight habit is the mark of a safe flier. If you'd like a hand getting set up and comfortable with a routine like this, that's exactly what I help with. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

When it's easier to hire it done

You don't have to own and fly a drone yourself to get the benefit. Sometimes hiring a pilot is the smarter path.

If you only need a drone look once in a while — a roof after a big storm, a one-time field survey — it may make more sense to hire someone who already has the drone, the Part 107 certificate, and the experience. They show up, fly it legally, and hand you the pictures, and you skip the learning, the registration, and the rules entirely.

For regular use, owning your own usually wins out — but for the occasional job, or while you decide whether it's worth getting your own certificate, a hired pilot gets you the view without the commitment. Both are fine answers; it just depends on how often you'd really use one.

✓ Match the choice to how often you'd fly

Fly often? Owning and learning it pays off. Need it once or twice a year? Hiring a certified pilot may be cheaper and simpler than becoming one yourself. There's no wrong answer — just the one that fits your use.

Keeping the drone ready to fly

A drone you can trust is one you've looked after. None of this is hard; it's just worth the few minutes.

Keep the batteries cared for — charged as the maker suggests, not stored dead or baking in a hot truck. Keep the propellers clean and look them over for cracks or chips before you fly, since a damaged prop is how a drone gets unsteady. And keep the drone's software updated, because those updates often carry the Remote ID and safety features the rules rely on.

Store it somewhere dry and out of the dust and cold — the same places that are hard on any electronics are hard on a drone. A quick look-over before each flight, and a proper home between flights, keeps it ready when you need that view in a hurry.

✓ Keep the software current

Drone makers push updates that can include the Remote ID and safety features the FAA expects. Keeping the software current isn't just tidiness — it can be part of staying legal, so don't put it off.

What I can help with, and what I can't

Let me be plain about where a tech helper fits with all this, so you know when to call me.

I'm a tech helper. I can help you get a drone set up and registered, confirm Remote ID is working, get the software current, find the right pages on [faa.gov/uas](https://www.faa.gov/uas), and point you to the TRUST test or the Part 107 study materials. Getting you ready and comfortable is right in my lane.

What I'm not is the FAA or an attorney. I can't issue your certificate, decide the fine points of whether your particular flying counts as business, or give you legal advice on liability or privacy. For the official word, the FAA is the source, and for legal questions your own attorney is. I'll always steer you to the real authority rather than guess.

★ The tech and the setup are mine

If it's getting the drone going, registered, updated, and pointed at the right official steps, that's exactly what I help with. For the ruling and the legal side, I'll point you to the FAA and the right advisor. Call (330) 200-8042.

Questions to ask yourself before you fly

Before you ever leave the ground, these questions keep you on the right and safe side of the rules.

Q: Am I flying for fun, or to help my farm business?

This decides everything. Pure fun means recreational rules and the TRUST test. Helping your farm — even your own land — generally means business flying and a Part 107.

Q: Is my drone registered, and does it broadcast Remote ID?

A drone over 250 grams must be registered (\$5, three years), and a registered drone must broadcast Remote ID. Confirm both before you fly.

Q: Have I checked the current rules and the airspace?

Rules change, so check faa.gov/uas, and make sure no airport or restricted airspace sits where you plan to fly.

Q: Can I keep it in sight, under 400 feet, and clear of people and lines?

If the honest answer to any part is no, don't launch until it's yes. Those limits are how everyone stays safe.

✓ When in doubt, don't launch

If you can't confidently answer these, the ground is the safe place to be until you can. There's no flight so urgent it's worth flying unsure of the rules.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from folks thinking about a drone for the farm, answered plainly.

Q: Do I need to register my drone?

If it weighs more than 250 grams — which covers most camera drones — yes. Registration is \$5 and good for three years, and you mark the number on the drone. The tiniest toys under that weight may not need it for recreational flying.

Q: I'm only flying over my own farm — do the business rules really apply?

Generally, yes — and this surprises people. If the flying helps your farm business, like scouting your own crops or inspecting your property for a repair decision, the FAA generally treats it as business flying that needs a Part 107 certificate, even on your own land.

Q: What's the difference between the TRUST test and Part 107?

TRUST is a short, free test for recreational flying — flying purely for fun. Part 107 is the FAA's certificate for flying for business, earned by passing a knowledge test. Farm use generally calls for Part 107.

Q: How high and how far can I fly?

Keep it under 400 feet above the ground and always within your own sight — not just on the screen. Stay well clear of people, power lines, aircraft, and airports, and check the current rules at [faa.gov/uas](https://www.faa.gov/uas) before you fly.

★ Thinking about a drone?

A drone can save you a world of climbing and walking once it's set up right. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you get it going legally — registered, updated, and pointed at the right FAA steps for how you plan to fly.

You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made getting a drone set up and flying legally on your place feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home — barn, shop, and all — work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I don't do the licensed electrical, trenching, or tower work myself — for that I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro.

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

What a Drone Is Good For

The handy jobs around a property

The job		Why it helps
Roof check	Look from above	No ladder climb
Field scouting	Cover ground fast	No muddy walk
Finding stock	Spot from the air	No long search
After a storm	See the damage	Before you climb

Great eyes for the high, far, and awkward -- not a repairman.

Getting Ready to Fly, in Order

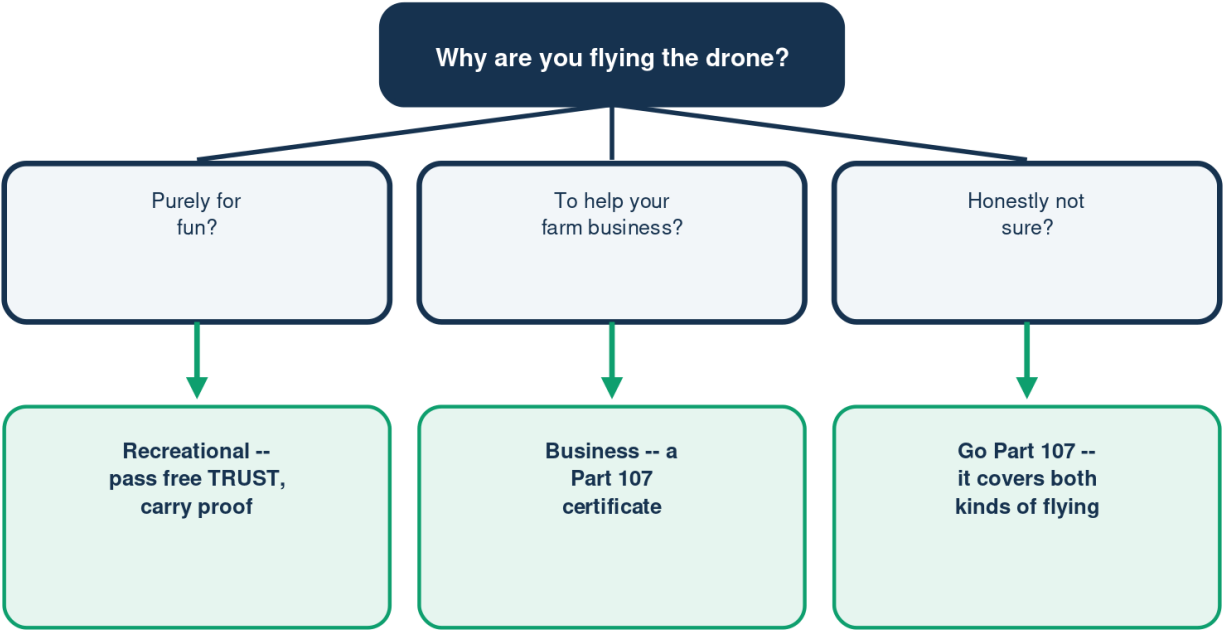
Do these before you ever launch



Remote ID on, under 400 feet, always in your sight.

Fun, or Farm Business?

The one question that sets the rules



Flying over your own farm to help your work generally counts as business.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.

The Safety Lines You Don't Cross

Every flight, fun or business

	The rule	Why it matters
Under 400 feet	Stay below	Clear of aircraft
Keep it in sight	Your own eyes	Not just the screen
Clear of people	Never overhead	A drone can fall
Clear of lines	Hard to see	They snatch it down

Crewed aircraft always have the right of way -- bring it down.



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— Bill

Prefer help without a visit?

Bill can screen-share and fix many things remotely — a flat \$49, free for Support Plan members.



A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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