



Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection

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DESPP STATEMENT ON DRONE SIGHTINGS IN CONNECTICUT

The state Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection is closely monitoring recent reports of drone activity in Connecticut. Commissioner Ronnell A. Higgins has directed the Connecticut State Police and the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to investigate any unusual reports of larger drones flying at night.

"We understand that people are anxious and they want to know what's going on," Higgins said. "After the reports out of New Jersey and other states, we want to assure Connecticut residents that we are fully engaged, and we take reports of suspicious-sightings seriously. As is our practice in Connecticut, we are working with our local, state and federal partners, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Transportation Safety Administration."

Earlier this week, the FBI and Department of Homeland Security released a joint statement stating that they "have no evidence at this time that the reported drone sightings pose a national security or public safety threat or have foreign a nexus. The FBI, DHS and our federal partners, in close coordination with the New Jersey State Police, continue to deploy personnel and technology to investigate this situation and confirm whether the reported drone flights are actually drones or are instead manned aircraft or otherwise inaccurate sightings."

"It appears that many of the reported sightings are actually manned aircraft, operating lawfully. There are no reported or confirmed drone sightings in any restricted air space," the joint DHS/FBI statement said.

Drone operation is regulated under federal law and users must comply with specific conditions. Commercial drone pilots must obtain a Remote Pilot Certificate. The Transportation Safety Administration is responsible for security at airports and the Federal Aviation Administration is responsible for the policies and regulations surrounding national airspace and aircraft to include airports. Drones are considered aircraft.

There are additional regulations that pertain to hobbyists who fly drones. State law also restricts drone operation over a municipality's public water supply and state parks.

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