

Drone Delivery – Coming Right Up!



What's that buzzing sound? It sounds like a swarm of bees. It's getting closer! Aha – it's a drone coming in for a landing. It's making a delivery. Right on schedule!

Drones are not yet making regular deliveries in Canada. But it may not be long now.

In August, a drone made a test run. It travelled from Vancouver Island to nearby Salt Spring Island – a six-kilometre flight. It flew at 50 kilometres per hour, 75 metres above the ground. The drone carried emergency medical supplies. It arrived eleven minutes later.

Meanwhile, Edmonton's airport is preparing for drone deliveries. It is adding drone take-off and landing zones. The drones will fly to places in western and northern Canada. They should be cleared for take-off by early next year.

What is a drone?

A drone is an unmanned aerial vehicle. Drones are already quite common. For instance, people use them to take aerial photos and videos. Or they fly them as a hobby.

Drones can also be used to make deliveries. That's especially handy for places that are difficult to get to by vehicle. Remote hospitals or mining camps, for example.

Drones can be small or large. Small ones carry up to five kilograms of cargo. Large drones could transport machinery.

An operator controls the drones remotely. They contain cameras and sensors. The

drones can adjust their route depending on the weather. They can detect obstacles such as electrical wires or helicopters. They can alert nearby pilots that there's a drone in their airspace.

New technology, new rules

Drone technology is improving all the time. Companies are eager to start using them for deliveries. London Drugs, for instance, wants to deliver prescription medications by drone.

In other parts of the world, drones are already hard at work. In Africa, they transport vaccines, drugs, and blood to rural hospitals. In Iceland, they deliver take-out food to places that are hard to get to by car.

So what's the hold up in Canada? Government regulators. They need to be sure drones are safe. They don't want the machines falling out of the sky. They don't want collisions with other aircraft.

Current regulations say that a drone must be within sight of its operator at all times. That's not possible for a drone delivery service. So regulators need to figure out new rules.

Experts say we also need an air traffic control system for drones. It would alert drones to other drones flying nearby. They might need to adjust their flight paths to avoid collisions. The more drones there are in an area, the more important that will be.

So Canada is not quite ready for drone deliveries. It's probably coming, though. Some day, your package might not be delivered to your door by a delivery truck. It might be delivered by a drone!



For what reasons are you in favour of drone deliveries? For what reasons are you against them?



Edmonton airport is patrolled by robirds. Robirds are drones painted to look like falcons, with flapping wings. They scare other birds away from planes' flightpaths.

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Comprehension Check

Write the letter of the *best* answer in the space beside each question.

_____ 1. **What is a drone?**

- a) An airplane.
- b) A delivery truck.
- c) An unmanned aerial vehicle.
- d) An unmanned terrestrial vehicle.

_____ 2. **Who controls a drone?**

- a) A pilot in the drone.
- b) An operator on the ground.
- c) Airport traffic control.
- d) No one controls a drone.

_____ 3. **What can drones transport?**

- a) Medical supplies.
- b) Machinery.
- c) Take-out food.
- d) All of the above.

_____ 4. **Where was a drone delivery test run made in August?**

- a) Between Vancouver Island and Salt Spring Island.
- b) Between Edmonton and northern Canada.
- c) Between a hospital and a mining camp in western Canada.
- d) There hasn't been a test run yet.

_____ 5. **What are Canadian regulators most concerned about when it comes to drones?**

- a) Money issues.
- b) Health issues.
- c) Safety issues.
- d) They do not have any concerns.

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Language Focus

Connect the words with their definition.

relating to the countryside

piece of equipment that reacts to changes in heat, light, etc.

operating in the air

an official rule

an object that is in the way

an accident in which a vehicle crashes into something

a person who makes sure rules are followed

lacking a crew

aerial

collision

obstacle

regulation

regulator

rural

sensor

unmanned



Now use three of these words in your own sentences.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

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The Pros and Cons of Drones

Pros (+)	Cons (-)

Here are my creative ideas: Other uses for drones Ways to make them safer

Blank space for writing creative ideas.