

SPLASH ALERT



Drone Operations - A New Liability Risk

Drone operations have received a lot of attention recently, especially for their interference with aerial firefighting efforts. They are, however, also receiving a great deal of attention for benefits they offer. As airborne observation, mapping, and video recording platforms, they can be extremely cost-effective when used to inspect the tops of buildings and water tanks, or to survey lengths of levees, dams, or penstocks.



Along with the benefits drones offer, come liabilities unique to their operation. Improper operations and/or crashes can lead to wildfires, third-party equipment damage, personnel injuries, power interruptions if power lines are cut, environmental pollution if drones fall into water sources, and even invasion-of-privacy lawsuits. Even with this partial list of potential problems, the liability risks are significant and real.

Considering the popularity of drones and the risks associated with their use, the ACWA JPIA needs to understand the extent of the risk posed by drone operations to the members in the Liability Program. ***A Survey Monkey questionnaire will soon be sent to all JPIA members.*** The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the extent of the current risks, by learning how many JPIA members presently include drones in their operations. The questionnaire will also attempt to determine the magnitude of future drone use.

For the JPIA to consider liability coverage for drone operations, ***it is extremely important that all members complete the survey.***