

Ski resorts saying no to drones

By Anna Callaghan, Outside

Helmet-mounted GoPros have become a common sight at ski areas. The next step: ski-run footage shot from drones. As UAVs get more accessible and affordable (the Federal Aviation Administration predicts 1 million drones will be sold during the holidays this year), some organizations fear they could become just as ubiquitous as—but more dangerous than—action cams.

That's why the National Ski Area Association (NSAA), the trade association for 330 ski areas in the United States and Canada, released a sample policy that bans drones without prior authorization. An overwhelming majority of the organization's resorts, from Aspen to Jackson Hole, have already put that ban in place, or soon will.

"Drone technology is relatively new, and given that ski areas tend to be at high altitude and in cold climates, which affects the battery life of drones, their reliability remains untested," says Dave Byrd, director of risk and regulatory affairs at the NSAA. "We're also concerned that they may crash into chairlift towers, fall onto people, or startle people because of their noise and cause collisions. Also, having noisy drones flying all over the place goes against the grain of the sort of skiing-in-nature experience."

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