

Aerial Inspections (Drones & Helicopters)

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL

Q. What are the drones/helicopters doing for SCE?

A. SCE safely uses helicopters and drones to inspect assets in high fire risk areas as part of a broader Wildfire Mitigation Plan. This includes a range of electrical equipment, from Distribution poles to Transmission towers and other infrastructures.

Q. What is different from doing inspections by ground vs. air (drones/helicopters)?

A. Drones and Helicopters offer a visual top down view of the electrical equipment that is not visible when looking at the same equipment from bottom up. This allows inspectors to see critical components from otherwise impossible to capture angles.

Q. Why is a helicopter flying over my house instead of a drone or vice versa?

A. In areas with medium to low population density, where electrical equipment is often spread far apart, helicopters help our inspectors gather quality data quickly and efficiently with minimal disturbance. With densely populated areas, we may choose to use drones because of their small size and quiet motors. It is our goal to obtain high quality images from these aerial inspections, while minimizing disruption to customers.

Q. How long will the drones/helicopters be in the general area?

A. Hours of operation will vary seasonally by hours of daylight – roughly starting one hour after sunrise and ending one hour before sunset. Exact times will also depend on daylight savings shifts, typically between the hours of 6:30 am and 4:30 pm.

Q. Are the drones/helicopters looking into my property?

A. SCE deploys drones and helicopters strictly for the purpose of inspecting and evaluating equipment in the field. The focus of these operations is and always will be our own electrical assets, structures and right of ways that support our assets. All imagery and geospatial information gathered is owned by SCE as confidential information and may only be used for specific company purposes in support of maintaining the energy grid. Any imaging of non-SCE properties and persons is incidental and protected from public disclosure by corporate privacy policy.

Q. Are the drone/helicopter pilots operating in restricted airspace? What about fires or dangerous weather?

A. SCE employs professional aviation services for our drone and helicopter activities. These vendors have taken into account any and all restrictions on airspace, including but not limited to: FAA regulations, weather, smoke, fire, Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs), and sensitive ecology.

Q. Did you know shooting at an aircraft (helicopter & drone) is a felony?

- A. Any person who maliciously and willfully discharges a firearm at an aircraft is guilty of a felony (247 (a) PC).

Q. Did you know pointing a laser at an occupied aircraft is a misdemeanor?

- A. Any person who willfully and maliciously discharges a laser at an aircraft, whether in motion or in flight, while occupied, is guilty of a misdemeanor (247.5 PC).

Q. Who can we contact for further questions?

- A. Poloi Lin – Aerial Inspections Stakeholder Engagement & Safety
- Poloi.Lin@sce.com
 - (909) 471-9657

Ray Pok – Local Public Affairs

- Raymond.Pok@sce.com
- (310) 310-0883

DRONES

Q. How long will the drones be near my house today?

- A. The amount of time will depend on many factors include weather conditions, the asset(s) is being captured, and the ease of the capturing the images. Typically, capturing images for a single equipment takes approximately an hour.

Q. How many drones will be performing inspections?

- A. Size of crews can range, but typically there will be anywhere from 5 – 10 crews (2 pilots) in an area.

Q. What is the inspection process like?

- A. Crews will operate drones for approximately 8 hours a day and follow predictable paths along adjacent SCE assets. Piloting and managing drones will primarily occur from streets, sidewalks, or public right of ways. Launch and landing zones for the drones will be placed in clear and open areas, marked by safety cones. Each flight will last approximately 30 minutes (5-15 minutes of flying at each asset) with 5-15 minutes of ground time in-between flights. In order for crews to maintain visual line of sight with the drone (per FAA regulation), the maximum distance between a crew and the drone will not exceed half a mile.

Q. How loud will the drones be?

- A. The anticipated sound level of a drone depends on various factors including distance. Generally speaking, most drones are expected to generate noise significantly less than a lawnmower being operated next door.

Q. What do the drones, crews and/or their vehicles look like?

A. See attached sheet showing pictures of drones, crews, and vehicles.

Q. How can I be certain the drone crew is doing work for SCE?

A. All personnel can and will provide an SCE issued badge at the request of customers or residents. All drone operators have undergone background checks and are licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Vehicles will have appropriate SCE decals stating, "Approved Contractor".

HELICOPTER

Q. How many helicopters will be performing inspections?

A. Typically, one to two helicopters in an area will be performing inspections.

Q. What do the helicopters look like and what are the tail numbers?

A. See attached sheet showing vendor helicopters.

Q. The helicopters working near my home are making too much noise and flying very low.

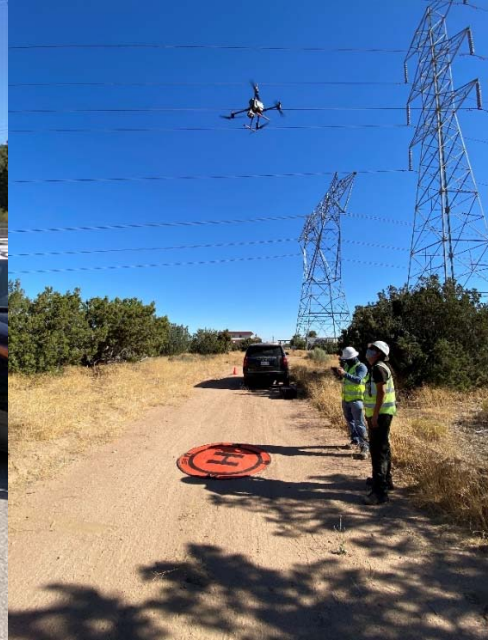
A. The helicopters fly low because they are capturing detailed images of critical hardware on SCE's poles, towers, and power lines. Although it may look like they are flying extremely low, the helicopters observe FAA regulations of 300 feet above ground level (AGL). This allows them to capture the image quality required to ensure the smaller components are in place and functioning properly.

Q. Why are you using an Australian contractor vs an American based contractor to do the work (based on the helicopter being low enough where the customer can read the writing)?

A. The specialized nature of this work limits the number of qualified vendors who can perform it safely. Safety is the highest priority and although this vendor's parent company is headquartered in Australia, they have a satellite office in the US and have been excellent partners in performing aerial inspections of the highest quality and safety standards.

Drone Vendor Pictures

SkySkopes:



Birds Eye Aerial Drones (BEAD):



Vendor Helicopter Images and Tail Numbers

Corporate Helicopters (Corp Geo)



AStar N549SA



AStar N549SA



Bell LongRanger N545SA



Bell JetRanger N535SA