



Drones in the Roofing Industry

By Matthew Smithsson, Fortified Roofing



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For the last couple of years the roofing industry has seen improvements in its many aspects due to certain technological advancements, the most prominent one being unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones. And since 2016, thanks to the updated FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) regulations on the use of small drones for non-recreational purposes, it has become even easier and regulated more simply.

When it comes to roofing, there are always certain risks involved, and safety issues are always a major concern. With the development, growth and the expansion of the industry, it is also important to take proper steps to secure workplace safety and keep it up to date. Since we live in a modern technological age, new developments have helped both the efficiency and workplace safety in many industries, including the roofing industry.

Source: <https://www.fortifiedroofing.com/new-technologies-in-roofing-industry>

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Unfortunately, accidents, injuries, different damages and even fatalities are a part of this job. It is always done at heights, it can be slippery, it involves working with heavy objects and complex installations while at height, working with sharp objects, and during different weather conditions. Often times the job is required to be done in a certain timeline which can be a short one, so when speed is added to the equation, safety risks increase even further. Roofing is also a costly and a complex job, requiring precision, accuracy, time and money, especially when it comes to big projects, such as with commercial and industrial roofing. Every mistake adds more time on the project, and more time involves more money. Every contractor and every client wants the job to be done well and with no mistakes or the possibility for mistakes, but at the same time wants it to be done fast, with no delays or missed deadlines.

UAVs or drones improve all of the above aspects and help solve most, if not all, of those problems. They are a valuable technological development, used in many aspects of human life and many industries. When it comes to the roofing industry, drones have many applications and can help the entire process, every step of the way.

“When attendees were asked what products were missing from the IRE, the number one response was UAV/drones.”

How do drones work?

The main objective of a drone is quite straightforward: to inspect and collect information. The way it does that is from the air, by taking photos or videos. The drone then stores the data on its internal memory or transfers it directly and wirelessly onto a software of the roofing company that is in charge of it. This is a very important part of the roofing job and the whole project, because these initial inspections and calculations are crucial for the project to start smoothly and to be done well. The drone inspects the conditions of the roof, measures its dimensions, assesses the roofing material and gathers all other information that the client or the contractor might need.





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What are the benefits of drones?

Drones have improved many aspects of the roofing industry and here are some of their most important benefits:

MEASUREMENTS AND SURVEYS

Drones are invaluable when it comes to preliminary estimations of both the roof and the job site. First of all, it will do all the necessary measurements and estimates of the roof, as was already stated before – condition, material, dimensions – and will do all of it with extreme precision and accuracy, avoiding any possible miscalculations and mistakes in the present or the future. Second of all, it can survey the job site and provide the information on where to place certain equipment, where to park vehicles and establish the ideal points of entry and exit.

Source: <http://www.digitaldroneimages.com/styled/roofinspection.html>

SAVING MONEY AND TIME

The technology we have in drones not only increases efficiency and decreases mistakes, but it also saves money. Contractors no longer need to send their employees on the field to do preliminary work of inspecting, analyzing and measuring the roof. With less men on-site, less time is spent working, especially including the double checking of measurements or reassessing the conditions, which is often inevitable. The drones can simply fly over the building, take photos and all the needed information is gathered in an instant.

Source: <http://www.edwards.af.mil/News/Article/1205456/team-edwards-expands-testing-of-commercial-drones/>

DECREASING RISKS

By decreasing the number of people on the roof, and the amount of time spent working, the risks of injuries and accidents are automatically lower. Every time a worker climbs on top of a roof he is at risk of injuries or even death, and with drones taking over a significant proportion of the work, workers are much safer. It doesn't have to be only preliminary work and inspections, drones can step in for people in some other situations when the working conditions are not safe. For example inspections of the roof after a big storm, or doing work on some very old roofs which are unpredictable and unsafe. Drones can evaluate the state of the roof, determine whether it is safe for workers to go up there, what kind of work needs to be done, and to what extent.

Source: <http://www.9news.com/weather/weather-colorado/how-drones-are-changing-the-game-after-damaging-weather-events/440310967>

About the author:

Matt Smithsson is an editor for Fortified Roofing, specialized in construction, smart technology, architecture, and design.

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