



State of Illinois
Bruce Rauner, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation
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Drones to Offer New View on Transportation

Research will provide information to help improve safety, reduce costs

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has begun testing drone technology to potentially help improve the safety of workers and the public, reduce costs and introduce new strategies on everything from bridge inspections to determining the appropriate responses to emergency incidents.

“One of our main priorities has been to encourage staff to find opportunities to innovate and seek out new ways to use the latest technology that supports the important work we do,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn. “While we are still in the experimental stage, we know that drones can gather valuable data to support a wide variety of applications. We are excited to launch this initiative that puts us on the path to becoming the most innovative department of transportation in the country.”

Recently, IDOT purchased two drones to explore ways to enhance mapping practices and regular inspections of bridges, as well as documenting progress in work zones. The drones are expected to play an important role in increasing efficiency and improving employee safety by reducing the need to have workers in the field in high-risk situations.

Testing of live-streaming video also is underway on how to manage and respond to disasters or emergency situations by providing real-time footage to key decision-makers on the ground.

The department envisions the new technology to eventually assist in 3-D design on projects, geological studies and technical exhibits. The drones also will be looked at as a resource to prepare materials that educate and inform the public about impacts of construction and future projects.

Use of the drones will follow strict adherence of Federal Aviation Administration guidelines and be overseen and deployed by experienced personnel in IDOT’s Division of Aeronautics.

Visit IDOT’s [YouTube channel](#) to watch drone footage of recently completed highway projects in Illinois.

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