

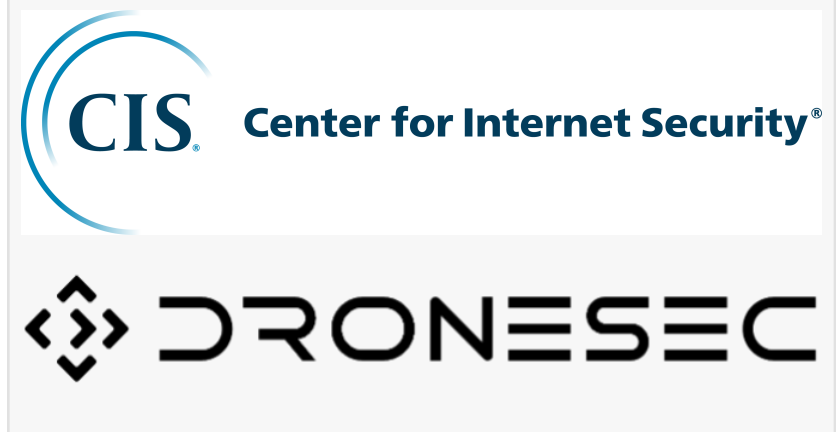
From the Ground to the Air: Why Large-Scale Event Security Must Adapt to Drones

New report warns that fan zones, open air stadiums and other crowded spaces face rising risks from unauthorized drones

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The Center for Internet Security, Inc.® (CIS®), in collaboration with DroneSec and leading U.S. law enforcement organizations, are warning that

security preparations for upcoming large sporting events must include the risks of commercially available drones, and threats they pose to cities hosting major sporting events, concerts, demonstrations and open air festivals.



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From UAS: Evolving Risks to Large-Scale Public Gatherings

The new report, [Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\): Evolving Risks to Large-Scale Public Gatherings](#), focuses on how inexpensive, easy to use drones are changing the security landscape for law enforcement and public safety agencies. While the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026 was a central case study, the findings apply to any large, crowded event in the United States.

“Traditional security measures were built to stop threats on the ground,” the report notes. “Drones change that equation by approaching from above, often without

warning.”

Why This Matters for Public Safety and Emergency Response Agencies

Drones are now widely available and capable of long flight times, high speeds, and carrying payloads. According to the report, these capabilities have already been used by criminals, extremists, and foreign organizations overseas, and those tactics are now spreading closer to home.

Even when drones are not used as weapons, unauthorized flights over crowded venues can cause serious disruption, including game delays, evacuations, panic, or injuries caused by falling aircraft. The report also notes that state and local agencies are often the first to respond to drone incidents, yet many lack clear response plans.

Key Takeaways for Public Safety

- Drones bypass ground security. A single drone can enter restricted airspace in seconds.
- Open areas are most vulnerable. Fan zones, parade routes, parking areas, and transit hubs are easier to access from the air.
- Detection alone is not enough. Effective response requires coordination, clear authority and crowd management plans.



Key Recommendations for Public Safety and Emergency Response

- Build basic airspace awareness. Use affordable tools such as Remote ID monitoring and basic radio frequency detection to know when drones are nearby.
- Plan beyond the stadium. Include fan zones, open air gatherings, and transit routes in security plans.
- Define roles before an incident. Clarify who detects, who assesses, and who coordinates with federal partners.
- Educate the public. Clear messaging about drone restrictions and how to report suspicious activity can prevent unintentional violations and improve early warning.

The upcoming FIFA World Cup, national celebrations, and future mega events represent both a challenge and an opportunity to build lasting, scalable drone awareness capabilities that protect everyday public gatherings, not just one time events.

“Success will depend less on new technology,” the report concludes, “and more on preparedness, coordination, and practical planning at the local level.”

For more information, or to speak with a security expert at CIS, please contact media@cisecurity.org or call/text 518-256-6978.

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