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Drone for the Holidays

According to some estimates, as many as one million unmanned aircraft systems ("UAS" or "drones") will be sold during this holiday season. These will range from \$50 toys weighing a few ounces to \$2,500 GPS enabled, multi-bladed machines weighing as much as 10 pounds or more, capable of flying thousands of feet into the air.

Most of the newly-minted drone operators will have no aviation or legal experience. They may not know, or may not care, that as of December 21 it will be a federal felony to fly a drone weighing over half a pound that is not registered with the FAA. Likewise, they may have little knowledge of the past civil penalties levied by the FAA for careless drone operation, or of the numerous state criminal laws governing their use.

Without a doubt some of these drones will be flown in violation of both state and federal law. Some will crash into property and, unfortunately, into people as well. There is a good chance that the FAA will issue fines, the police will make arrests, and lawsuits will be filed.

We urge those who are considering giving, or have received, a drone to educate themselves about the rules of responsible use. The FAA has some helpful advice on its website, <http://knowbeforeyoufly.org/>. The lawyers at Frost Brown Todd can advise you about the legal requirements, whether your drone will be used for enjoyment or as part of a business. If there is an unfortunate incident, we are available to help protect your rights. If you use common sense and seek out some guidance, a new drone can be a wonderful new hobby or business tool.

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