



University of Illinois

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Deputy Chief of Police - 25 years
University of Illinois

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Covering a 10-mile radius, including a Big 10 football stadium and airport, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus is home to more than 56,000 students. Sporting events and concerts at its Memorial Stadium can reach fever pitch at a capacity north of 85,000 spectators. Safety concerns and injuries for the players, patrons, and performers in the stadium are paramount for the University's Police and Public Safety teams. The Police officers and public safety officials who work endlessly behind the scenes are tasked with ensuring there are no disruptions, including from drones, which present a new challenge.



The Challenge

During every home football game, typically multiple nefarious drones attempt to intrude into the stadium's airspace. When a pilot loses control or an unidentified drone enters the stadium, officials have to step in to maintain public safety and keep these major events moving smoothly.

Recently, a pilot breached the stadium's airspace and hovered deep into the bowl of the football stadium during the 3rd quarter, exposing a significant security vulnerability. Following this incident, the University of Illinois Police Department knew a solution was needed to monitor, identify, and prevent reckless and harmful drones over the stadium.



The Solution: SkySafe

On every game day, the University of Illinois Police team leverages SkySafe to detect unauthorized drone operations, prevent game disruptions, and keep players and event attendees safe.

Easy installation

The installation was seamless and fast, ready to use within 24 hours.



Comprehensive service

SkySafe manages the equipment and provides Drone Detection as a Service, which jointly operates the existing infrastructure at the university. This enables the University of Illinois Police Department the ability to prepare for the worst, preventing drone collisions, and identifying inexperienced or nefarious drone pilots.



User-friendly detection

SkySafe is user-friendly—from instant text messaging alerts to real-time monitoring at the Command Post to detect and monitor unauthorized drone flights.



The Results

Before SkySafe, the University of Illinois struggled with the complexity of drone detection; anything beyond watching a drone within a visual line of sight was challenging. After deploying SkySafe's cloud-based solution, the university gained full situational awareness of its airspace in order to keep its property, people, and assets safe.

Success rate

The success rate of locating the pilot and drone is now close to 100%.

Coverage

SkySafe's Cloud Network model provides a zone of visibility covering the entire 10-mile radius of the campus, including both Memorial Stadium and Willard Airport. It also shares historical data, allowing the Police teams to quickly identify the pilot associated with the drone, observe flight patterns, and prevent mischief.

Safety

SkySafe has simplified the complexities of drone detection, freeing up the University Police team to focus entirely on safety and to solve other issues at hand—from medical emergencies to crowd security.

“Drone monitoring presents an exciting new challenge for us. As a team we have very little experience with drones, so in looking for a monitoring system we knew we needed something easy to use. We also knew we wanted to have a monitoring system in place by the start of the 2023 football season and we brought SkySafe in right under the line. The SkySafe team was efficient with the deployment and had the system working seamlessly very quickly. They continue to be incredibly responsive and are a true partner, answering questions and listening to our feedback. Now, when people enter our command post and see SkySafe, they're drawn to it and we have the confidence to handle any drone situation that arises.”

Joe McCullough, Deputy Chief of Police - 25 years, University of Illinois



100%

success rate of locating pilot and drone

100%

visibility of entire campus



increase in safety and freed up police resources

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Problem

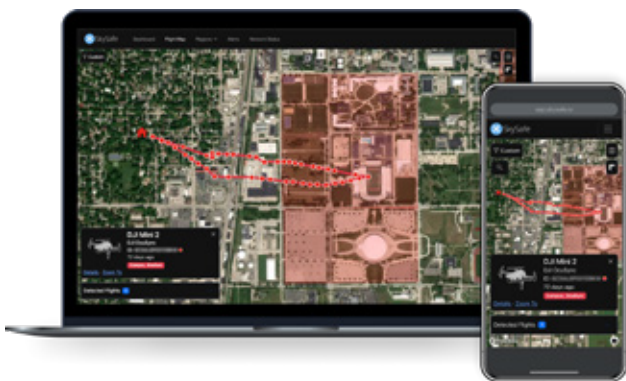
- Multiple drones at every event
- Could only track drones visually—no way to act
- Limited resources
- No drone expertise

Solution

- 24 hours from set-up to operational
- Full area coverage and beyond
- Constantly up-to-date
- Ongoing commitment to customer success

Benefits

- Easy setup and user-friendly
- Resolve and prosecute with historical and real-time data
- Facilitated in capturing operators in the first month
- SkySafe experts available at all times to ensure success



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