
PLAN • FLY • DELIVER

DRONE SERVICES BUSINESS GUIDE

Test demand before buying.

Earn the certificate first.

Sell answers, not pictures.

ROOF | PROPERTY | PROGRESS | FIELD

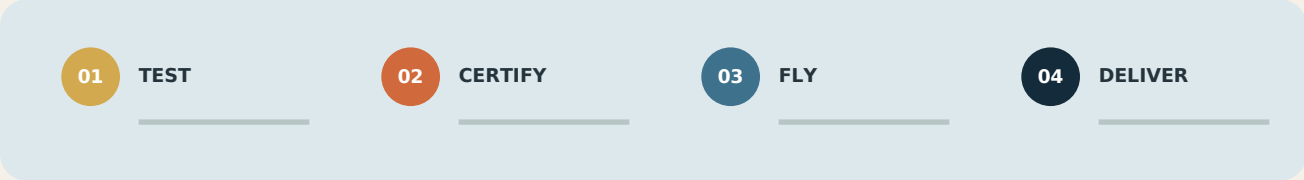
Veteran's Strategic Solutions LLC



START HERE

How to Use This Guide

Read the core guide before buying an aircraft, promising a flight, or quoting a deliverable. Then use the worksheets to test demand, budget equipment, define scope, estimate and invoice work, document roof jobs, track leads and flights, and control safety and compliance.

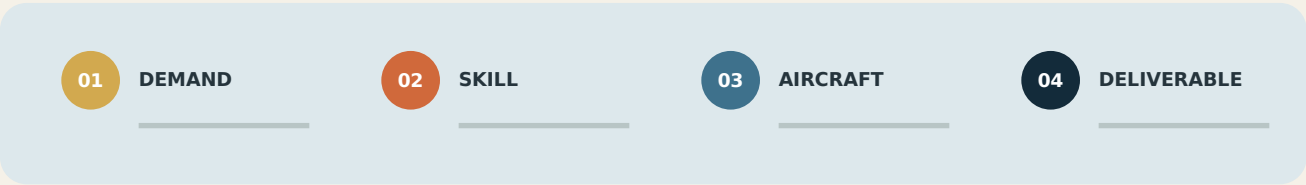


ROOF INSPECTION | A defined report turns aerial imagery into a repeatable business deliverable.

PIECE	USE
Core guide	Test demand, understand buyers, certify, equip, price, launch, and assess the model.
Operating kit	Use the startup, budget, estimate, report, invoice, log, tracker, and safety tools.

CORE GUIDE 01

1. The bet



The core assumption that must be true: enough businesses within driving distance need aerial imagery, inspection, or mapping often enough to justify buying equipment and earning the required certificate.

This is a line where you must acquire a new skill and buy real equipment before you can earn a dollar. That changes the order of operations — the certificate and the aircraft come first, and both cost money before any customer says yes.

The fastest zero-budget test, and do this before spending \$175 on the exam: call six businesses that would plausibly buy — two roofing contractors, a real estate agent, a farm operation, a construction contractor, and a solar installer. Ask what they currently do when they need to see a roof, a field, or a job site from above. If the answer is “we climb it” or “we don’t,” there is a job. If it is “we already have a guy,” you have found your competitor and you should ask what he charges.



PROGRESS RECORD | Recurring construction documentation sells a decision-ready record, not loose images.

The three biggest reasons it fails:

RISK	WHAT IT MEANS
Low barrier, crowded field	The certificate takes weeks and a drone costs less than a used car. Anyone can enter, and many have. Undifferentiated aerial photography is a commodity and prices reflect that.
Weather and daylight	Wind, rain, and cold ground you. Wind in particular will cost you scheduled days, and rescheduled clients sometimes become lost clients.
Selling pictures instead of answers	The photographers compete on price. The operators who charge well deliver a deliverable — a roof report, an acreage measurement, a progress record — not a folder of images.

CORE GUIDE 02

2. Who pays, in their own words

01	ROOF	02	LAND	03	BUILD	04	FIELD
BUYER		IN THEIR OWN WORDS					
The roofing or insurance contractor. Needs to inspect roofs without putting someone on a ladder.		"I've got twelve inspections and two guys." "The adjuster wants documentation before and after." "Somebody's going to fall off a roof eventually."					
The real estate agent or land seller. Rural acreage sells on aerial views.		"You can't tell what this property is from the ground." "The listing needs to show the whole parcel."					
The construction contractor or property developer. Monthly progress documentation for owners and lenders.		Recurring documentation supports owners, lenders, and project records.					
The farm operation.		Field imagery, stand counts, irrigation and drainage problems seen from above. This is a real market that gets overlooked in favor of real estate work.					



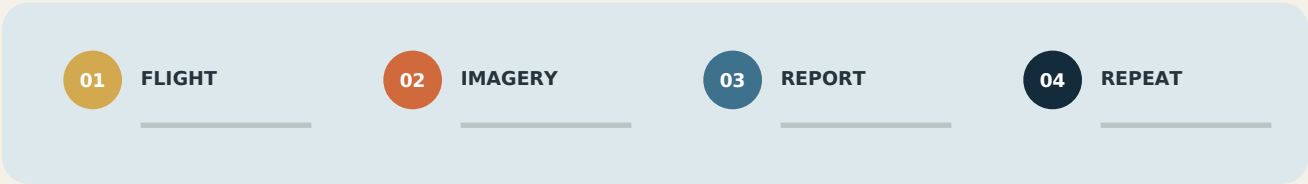
FIELD IMAGERY | Scheduled flights can reveal irrigation, drainage, and stand-count questions from above.

Where they are: contractor networks, the chamber, farm co-ops, and real estate offices. In person, not online.

What triggers the buying decision: a listing going live, a storm, a lender’s progress requirement, or a season starting.

CORE GUIDE 03

3. The smallest version you can charge for



One product: the roof inspection package. Flight, imagery, and a short written report a contractor or adjuster can hand to a customer.

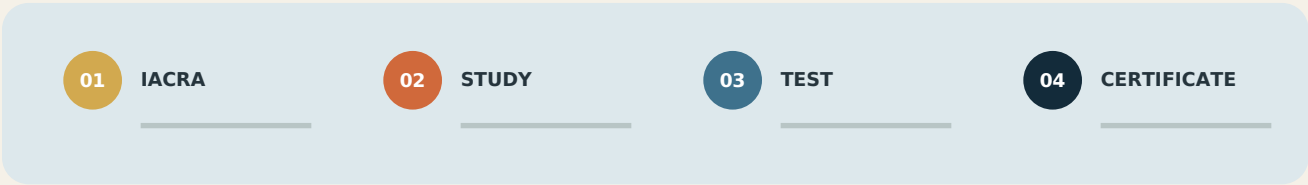
Not “drone photography.” Roofing has the clearest, most repeatable, most safety-driven demand of any drone buyer, and a contractor who trusts you calls back every week instead of once when he sells a house.

Fastest path to the first paying customer: two free roof flights for one local roofing contractor, delivered with a real report. Roofers are a tight, referral-driven network and one satisfied contractor introduces you to the rest.

PACKAGE	BOUNDARY	DELIVERABLE	PROOF
One roof	Defined address and flight area	Selected aerial images	Flight record
One visit	Weather and access conditions	Short written report	Delivered file set
One client contact	Questions and exclusions	Before / after documentation	Client acceptance
No diagnosis beyond scope	Written limits	Contractor-ready handoff	Protected expectation

CORE GUIDE 04

4. What it actually takes



The certificate — verified, and it is the whole gate. Commercial drone work requires an FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate. The path:

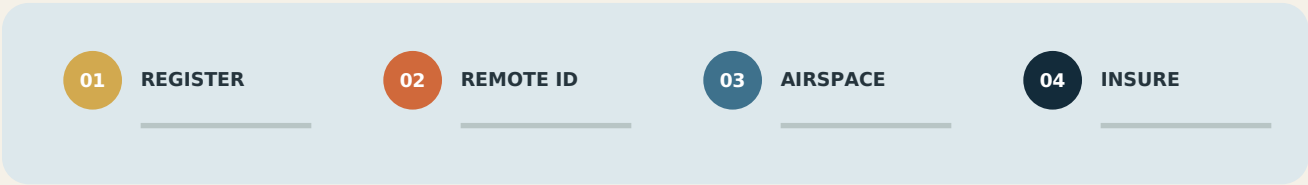
STEP	REQUIREMENT
1	Create a free IACRA account and get an FAA Tracking Number — no cost.
2	Study. Free FAA materials exist; paid courses run \$150-\$300 and most people take two to four weeks part-time.
3	Pass the Unmanned Aircraft General knowledge test — 60 multiple-choice questions, 70% to pass, in person at an approved testing center. \$175 per attempt. Fail and you wait 14 days and pay again.
4	Submit Form 8710-13 through IACRA, pass automatic TSA vetting, receive the certificate.

Requirements: 16 or older, able to read and speak English, physically and mentally fit. The certificate itself does not expire, but recurrent training is required every 24 months and is free online. Beyond the exam fee and optional study materials, the FAA application and TSA vetting cost nothing.

GATE	READY WHEN
Demand	Discovery calls support a defined buyer and use case
Certificate	Required pilot path is complete
Aircraft	Purchased after the certificate and demand test
Job	Scope, airspace, weather, site, and deliverable are controlled

CORE GUIDE 04

Equipment and operating limits



Also required: register the aircraft with the FAA, and comply with Remote ID. Standard operating limits are 400 feet above ground, visual line of sight, daylight-adjacent operations; controlled airspace requires authorization through LAANC.

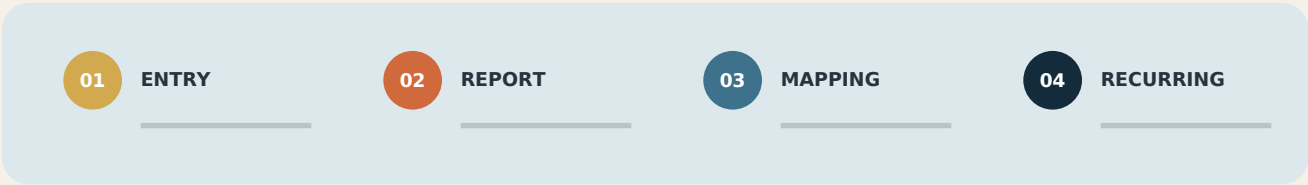
Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.

Realistic startup: \$1,300 to \$2,900 including the certificate, an entry commercial aircraft, and accessories. Insurance is on top and worth carrying from the first paid flight.

ITEM	CHEAPEST SOURCE	APPROXIMATE COST
Part 107 knowledge test	PSI testing center	\$175 per attempt
Study course (optional)	Pilot Institute, UAV Coach, or free FAA materials	\$0-\$300
Aircraft — entry commercial	DJI Air or Mavic class, new or used	\$800-\$1,800
Extra batteries and props	Manufacturer or Amazon	\$200-\$400
Case, landing pad, ND filters	Amazon	\$100-\$200
FAA aircraft registration	faadronezone.faa.gov	\$5 per aircraft, 3 years
Drone liability insurance	On-demand hourly, or annual policy	verify — on-demand exists for occasional flying
Editing and mapping software	Free tiers exist; mapping software is the upsell	\$0-\$100/month

CORE GUIDE 05

5. Pricing



03

04

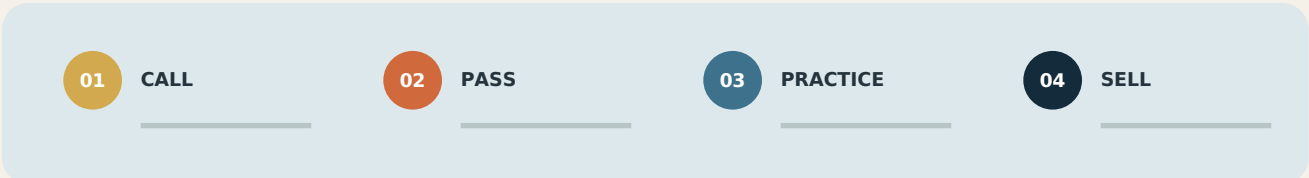
Which maximizes early revenue: the mid tier. Roof reports pay better than listing photos, repeat far more often, and are not judged on artistic merit.

The tier that builds the business is the recurring one — a contractor documenting progress monthly, or a farm operation flying fields on a schedule.

TIER	OFFER	PRICE
Low	Real estate or property aerial set, 15-25 edited images	\$150-\$300
Mid	Roof inspection with written report	\$250-\$500
Premium	Mapping, orthomosaic, or recurring progress documentation	\$600-\$1,500 per project or monthly retainer

PRICE INPUT	RECORD
Service and deliverable	
Site, travel, airspace, access	
Flight, image processing, report	
Weather window and reschedule rule	
Recurring schedule or project count	

6. First 90 days



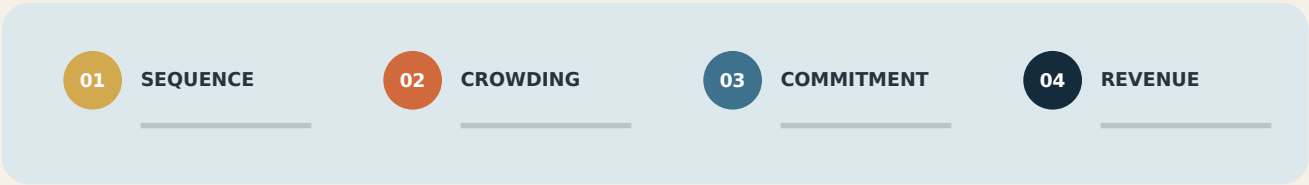
WINDOW	ACTION
Days 1-30.	Six discovery calls before spending anything. If four of six already have a drone guy, stop here and put the money into another line.
Days 31-60.	Pass Part 107. Buy the aircraft only after passing.
Days 61-90.	Two free roof flights for one contractor, then five paid jobs. Sign one recurring client.

THE ONE METRIC

The one metric: paid flights per month. Equipment sitting in a case is the failure mode of this business.

MONTH	PAID FLIGHTS	RECURRING CLIENTS	WEATHER DELAYS	DECISION
1				
2				
3				

7. Honest assessment



Drone work asks you to spend roughly \$1,300 to \$2,900 and several weeks of study before a single customer can say yes — and it puts you in a crowded field, where the barrier to entry that lets you in also lets everyone else in.

Two things would change that judgment. If the six discovery calls come back saying nobody local is doing roof or agricultural work, the crowding argument weakens considerably. And if you find one contractor or farm operation willing to commit to recurring work before you buy anything, the equipment stops being a bet and becomes a purchase against known revenue.

Run the calls first. The \$175 exam fee is not the risk — the aircraft and the weeks are.

SIGNAL	WEAK	STRONG
Discovery calls	Most already have an operator	Clear gap in roof or agricultural work
Recurring demand	One-time image requests	Committed schedule before equipment purchase
Offer	Undifferentiated photography	Defined report, measurement, or progress record
Equipment	Purchased before demand	Purchased against known revenue

WORKSHEET 01

Startup Checklist

01

VALIDATE

02

CERTIFY

03

EQUIP

04

LAUNCH

DONE	ACTION	OWNER / DATE / NOTES
☐	Complete six discovery calls before spending anything.	
☐	Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.	
☐	Complete the Part 107 path and required recurrent training schedule.	
☐	Register the aircraft and confirm Remote ID compliance.	
☐	Select the first defined offer, scope, deliverable, and reschedule rule.	
☐	Set airspace, weather, site, equipment, battery, and emergency controls [VERIFY].	
☐	Obtain and document appropriate insurance [VERIFY].	
☐	Complete two practice roof packages with real written reports.	
☐	Sell five paid jobs and pursue one recurring client.	

WORKSHEET 02

Equipment and Budget Worksheet

- 01 CERTIFICATE
- 02 AIRCRAFT
- 03 POWER
- 04 PROTECTION



PREFLIGHT SYSTEM | Aircraft, controller, batteries, records, and site controls operate as one system.

ITEM	NEEDED?	ESTIMATE	ACTUAL	NOTES
Part 107 test / study				
Aircraft / controller				
Extra batteries / props				
Case / landing pad / filters				
Registration / Remote ID				
Liability insurance [VERIFY]				
Editing / mapping software				
Vehicle / travel / safety gear				
Backup / storage / contingency				

BUDGET CONTROL

TOTAL ESTIMATE: _____ TOTAL ACTUAL: _____ CASH RESERVE: _____

WORKSHEET 03

Pricing and Estimate Template

01

SITE

02

FLIGHT

03

PROCESS

04

DELIVER

CLIENT	SITE / ADDRESS	ESTIMATE #	DATE

INPUT	BASIS	AMOUNT
Service tier / deliverable	Aerial set / roof report / mapping / recurring	
Site and travel	Address, access, distance, hazards	
Airspace and authorization	Review and required approval [VERIFY]	
Flight planning and capture	Flight count and expected duration	
Image processing / mapping	Selected files or defined output	
Written report	Scope and format	
Weather / reschedule rule	Defined trigger and calendar	
Recurring frequency	Project count or monthly schedule	
Tax [VERIFY]	Applicable local rule	
Total estimate		

WORKSHEET 04

Roof Inspection Report Template

01

SITE

02

CONDITIONS

03

IMAGES

04

HANDOFF

FIELD	RECORD
Client / contractor / contact	
Property address / site access	
Flight date / time / pilot	
Aircraft / registration / Remote ID	
Airspace / authorization [VERIFY]	
Weather / visibility / wind	
Requested roof areas / exclusions	
Image file numbers / locations	
Observed conditions within scope	
Items requiring contractor review	
Delivery files / delivery date	
Client acceptance / next step	

Invoice Template

01

SERVICE

02

DELIVERABLE

03

TOTAL

04

DUE

BUSINESS	CLIENT	INVOICE #	DATE / DUE

DESCRIPTION	SITE / QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
Property aerial set			
Roof inspection and report			
Progress documentation			
Mapping / orthomosaic			
Travel / additional processing			
Other			

SUMMARY	AMOUNT
Subtotal	
Tax [VERIFY]	
Total	
Balance due	

Job Log and Lead Tracker

01

LEAD

02

AIRSPACE

03

FLIGHT

04

FOLLOW UP

DATE	LEAD / SOURCE	USE CASE	QUOTE	STATUS / NEXT STEP

JOB	DATE	AIRSPACE	WEATHER	FEE	DELIVERED / FOLLOW UP

ONE METRIC

PAID FLIGHTS: _____ RECURRING CLIENTS: _____ WEATHER DELAYS: _____ DECISION: _____

WORKSHEET 07

Safety, Compliance and Client Protection

01PILOT

02AIRSPACE

03SITE

04RECORD

Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.

CHECK	CONTROL	INITIALS / NOTES
☐	Pilot certificate and recurrent training status are current.	
☐	Aircraft registration and Remote ID compliance are documented.	
☐	Airspace was reviewed and required authorization obtained through LAANC.	
☐	Visual line of sight and standard operating limits are maintained.	
☐	Weather, daylight, site hazards, people, structures, and launch area were reviewed [VERIFY].	
☐	Aircraft, controller, batteries, props, storage, and emergency plan were checked [VERIFY].	
☐	Client scope, access, reschedule, deliverable, and acceptance rules are written [VERIFY].	
☐	Insurance and incident-reporting requirements are documented [VERIFY].	
☐	Flight, image, authorization, delivery, and client records are retained [VERIFY].	

STOP RULE

If certificate status, airspace, authorization, Remote ID, weather, site conditions, aircraft condition, insurance, or client scope cannot be confirmed, stop and mark it [VERIFY] before flight.