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How To Choose an Aerial Photographer

You're looking for your first aerial photographer or the one you've been happy with for years just retired. Do you just Google "Aerial Photographer", take a look at their sample pictures, and make a selection? Hopefully not. But how do you make a better more informed decision?

Here's a few criteria that should help you in choosing your first or next aerial photographer.

First and foremost, establish that he or she has their Part 107 certification. This is a must. The FAA fines people who fly commercially without a license. How would they know? They won't unless something goes wrong, and if you are dealing with someone that is not certified, the chances of that happening increases.

In addition to getting their initial certification, all drone pilots are required to recertify every two years. They should have a certificate showing when they passed their last test if their original certification is more than 2 years old. If you have any doubts, ask to see these documents. The FAA can also fine you for hiring an uncertified pilot, so take the time to become familiar with them before proceeding.

Some other questions to ask your new pilot about related to their skills are how often do they fly? How many hours have they flown the aircraft that they are now going to fly over the property you are going to list? Do they fly year-round or only when the weather is good? Pilots that can tell you they have over 50 hours in similar aircraft and fly in all types of conditions are preferred, but less experience can work if they are careful in their operations.

Another consideration in picking your pilot is how are they insured? Three different methods have been used. Some pilots assume that their homeowner's policy will cover them. While this might be the case in some instances, this is rather risky since there really is no policy specific language for the drone flights. Some use a flight-by-flight policy where they can get insurance the day of the flight to cover the flight. This type of insurance has been around for a while, so the risk is low, if they do get the policy the day of the flight. Then there are people who carry insurance year-round. These people can provide you with a copy of their policy or a one-page summary for your records. It all depends on what level of risk you want to take in this area.

Some other areas you should also look at are their website (if they have one) and their portfolio of work done. This will give you a good idea about what their current work looks like and whether they are a good match for you.

In summary, when you look for a new aerial photographer, make sure they are certified, have the necessary experience to do the job, and you are comfortable how they are insured. In addition, ask to see some previous work to make sure you feel comfortable with their ability to complete the task at hand.