Temporary Flight Restriction on Drones in Sherpa Fire Burn Zones

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has implemented a temporary flight restriction for the airspace around the Sherpa Fire burn zone, including West Goleta and nearby incident command posts.

This restriction applies to all manned and unmanned aircraft systems. Local aviation experts are especially concerned about drones, which can pose a safety hazard and delay firefighting aviation operations in the area.

Brian Sexton, Forest Aviation Officer with the Los Padres National Forest, explained that “there is a lot of air traffic coming in from various areas [for the Sherpa Fire]. Drones in particular should abide by the same FAA rules and avoid the airspace to ensure firefighters can safely do their job.”

According to the United States Forest Service, “unmanned aircraft systems should not be flown near or around wildfires on National Forest System Lands.”

The restricted zone for all aircraft systems is approximately a 5-by-3 mile perimeter encompassing the following areas: Canada del Refugio, Canada del Corral, Canada del Capitan, Canada del Venadito and Canada de la Destiladera, and West Goleta (specifically areas north of Calle Real and west of Los Carneros Road).

All enforcement and safety efforts conducted are in conjunction with Santa Barbara Airport management. Disruptions to flights and other airport activities are not anticipated at this time.

Forest Service personnel noted that the temporary flight restriction will not be canceled until the fire is fully extinguished and response agencies have completed fire suppression and clean-up tasks. Residents can access information on active temporary flight restrictions at https://www.faa.gov/uas/tfr/.
County of Santa Barbara Fire, Sheriff, Office of Emergency Management and Public Health departments have posted information related to the Sherpa Fire on their social media including Twitter, Facebook and Nixle.

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