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Breakthrough for Drone delivery services

Drone fleet gets license as airline

In the US, drones may only fly within sight of the pilot. Because of these and other rules, the operation of commercial fleets is not yet possible. Therefore, the **Alphabet** daughter **Wing** has now received a license as an airline.

For the first time, the FAA has now developed a procedure that adapts the conditions for admission, which by default include provisions for the training of flight attendants and the safety of the crew on board aircraft, to the requirements of a drone operator. "This is an important step forward for the safe testing and integration of drones into our economy," said US Transport Minister Elaine Chao, according to a statement circulated by Wing on licensing.

The Alphabet subsidiary Wing was the first company in the United States to receive approval as a cargo airline for its fleet of delivery drones. Thus, the company founded by formerly belonging to Google technology laboratory X, according to claims to begin after years of testing for the first time with commercial flights. The FAA license initially applies to two rural areas in the state of Virginia. There, Wing now wants to offer its delivery service to local companies and businesses. For example, the drones could bring food deliveries or medicines to customers within a few minutes.

With the license, the Alphabet subsidiary is the first drone operator in the US to take the critical step of testing for commercial operation based on exemptions. A few weeks ago, the company had already received a similar permit in Australia. Wing and its competitors need the time-consuming approval process as an airline in the US, since the rules that apply specifically to the operation of drones do not permit commercial delivery over medium or long distances. For example, drone pilots usually have to stay within sight of the aircraft. The Wing drones, however, are controlled remotely by pilots from an office. The tests carried out by the companies on the basis of temporary special permits. In these experiments, however, they are not allowed to take any fees from the customers.

The business with drone deliveries is considered hotly contested. Among other things, the trading giant Amazon, the car broker Uber and parcel services such as UPS and DHL have developed delivery drones, but have so far not come out of a test operation.

Wing has developed a drone that can take off like a helicopter in a vertical position and stand in the air, as well as using wings and a propeller drive to cover relatively large distances relatively quickly. Packages are transported in the fuselage of the machines and lowered to the receiver on a rope while the drone hovers in the air. The procedure is only suitable for rural areas. According to the new approval, the drones are not allowed to fly over crowds or urban areas.

Source: n-tv.de, mbo

<http://www.n-tv.de/wirtschaft/Drohnenflotte-bekommt-Lizenz-als-Fluglinie-article20984708.html>