



Drone Exploring: Career Spotlights

Real Estate — Post

Overview: This session takes a serious look at real estate drone photography and videography as a career, including freelance and staff photographer roles, the FAA Part 107 certification required, and how to build a client base. Explorers learn realistic pay ranges (per-project and salaried), the deliverables clients expect (exterior stills, twilight shots, virtual tour flythroughs) and plan a mock real estate shoot list for a listing.

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the freelance and staff career pathways in real estate drone photography and videography.
- Learn what the FAA Part 107 certification requires and why it's necessary for this paid work.
- Identify realistic pay ranges, both per-project and salaried, for this field.
- Practice planning a mock real estate shoot list, including exterior, twilight, and virtual tour deliverables.

SUPPLIES

- Laptop and projector to show sample real estate drone photography and virtual tour footage
- Printed handouts: Career Pathway — Real Estate Drone Photographer and Listing Shoot List Worksheet
- Whiteboard or flip chart and markers
- Optional: printed or digital copy of FAA's free Part 107 study guide (faa.gov/uas)

ADVISOR NOTES

- This session is career-focused: Use real deliverables, real certification requirements, and real pay ranges rather than a hobbyist framing.
- Discuss that this field is often freelance or gig-based (paid per listing) but can also be a salaried staff photographer role at a larger real estate or media company.
- Encourage Explorers who are 16 or older and interested to look at the FAA Part 107 study guide as a concrete next step after this session.
- Consider inviting a guest speaker who works in real estate photography and videography to share their career path. See Optional Extensions.
- If no guest speaker is available, Advisors can run the entire session using this outline, the Career Pathway handout, and the resource links below.

SESSION OUTLINE

- **Welcome and Icebreaker** (10 min)
 - Ask: "What's the most impressive real estate listing photo or video you've ever seen online?"
- **Regulatory Moment: Certification for Paid Work** (10–15 min)
 - Review the FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate: minimum age 16, required knowledge test, needed for any paid drone photography work.
 - Discuss basic business considerations: liability insurance, client contracts, and delivering files on time.
- **Mini-Lesson: The Business of Real Estate Drone Photography** (15–20 min)
 - Roles: freelance real estate drone photographer, staff photographer at a real estate media company, hybrid photo/video/3D-tour specialist.
 - Typical pay: Many freelancers charge \$100-\$300 per listing shoot; average annual pay for real estate drone photography is around \$62,000/year (most between \$57,000-\$71,000); salaried roles commonly range \$40,000-\$70,000/year.
 - Discuss common deliverables: exterior establishing shots, twilight photos, and virtual tour flythrough video.
- **Activity: Plan a Listing Shoot List** (20–25 min)

- Using the Listing Shoot List Worksheet, small groups plan a mock shoot for a real estate listing, including exterior stills, a twilight shot, and a virtual tour flythrough path.
- **Wrap-Up Discussion (10 min)**
 - Groups present their shoot lists.
 - Discuss the concrete steps (certification, building a portfolio, finding clients) needed to pursue this as a career or side business.

REFLECTION SECTION

Advisor Note: Some sample questions are below. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own.

Focusing Questions

- What surprised you about how much planning goes into a single real estate shoot?
- Would you rather work freelance (per listing) or as a salaried staff photographer? Why?

Analysis Questions

- Why do real estate photographers need Part 107 certification specifically for paid work?
- How does the choice of shots (exterior, twilight, virtual tour) affect how a listing is perceived by buyers?

Generalization Questions

- How is building a client base in this field like starting any small creative business?
- What other careers combine a technical certification with a client-facing creative service, like this one does?

Challenge: This week, look up one local real estate photography business and see what packages or pricing they offer for drone photos and video.

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Guest Speaker: Invite someone who works in real estate photography or videography to share their career path and take questions, in person or by video call.

Advisor-Led Option: If no guest speaker is available, Advisors can run the full session using this outline, the Career Pathway handout, and the resource links below. No outside expert is required.

Resource Links: FAA Part 107 overview ([faa.gov/uas/commercial_operators](https://www.faa.gov/uas/commercial_operators)); real estate media company websites for sample pricing and packages; local real estate photographer portfolios.

Extension Project: Explorers who are 16 or older can begin studying for the actual Part 107 knowledge test using the FAA's free study guide.

Handout: Career Pathway — Real Estate Drone Photographer

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A typical path into this career looks like this:

1. Interest and Hobby Flying

Learn basic drone operation and photo and video composition.

2. FAA Part 107 Certification (Age 16+)

Pass the FAA knowledge test to legally fly for pay.

3. Build a Portfolio

Shoot sample listings (with permission) to build a demo reel and pricing packages.

4. Freelance or Staff Work

Freelancers often charge \$100-\$300 per listing; staff photographer roles commonly pay \$40,000-\$70,000/year salaried.

5. Growing the Business

Average annual pay across the field is around \$62,000/year (most between \$57,000-\$71,000), growing with reputation and client base.

Handout: Listing Shoot List Worksheet

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Use this worksheet to plan your mock real estate listing shoot.

Shot #	Description	Time of Day	Purpose
1			
2			
3			
4			