



IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO CRASH THIS NEW DRONE

News / Manufacturer



The DJI Phantom 4 can see and avoid obstacles in its path.

Chinese drone maker DJI wants to make flying a drone so easy that anyone can do it, thanks to easier-to-use controls and the ability to avoid obstacles.

The \$1,399 Phantom 4 can see and automatically avoid dangerous obstructions thanks to a new set of front-facing sensors. If the drone doesn't think it can make it around a given obstacle, it will hover in place until the pilot takes action. Another new feature in DJI's smartphone control app lets pilots navigate the Phantom 4 by double-tapping a destination on a map.

The Phantom 4 is available for preorder online starting March 1 through DJI and Apple. It begins shipping on March 15, when it will also be available in DJI and Apple's retail outlets. Other stores will get stocked up shortly thereafter.

DJI's latest drone also includes better target-tracking technology. While viewing camera footage on DJI's smartphone app, pilots simply tap a subject and the Phantom 4 will keep that person or

object centered in frame. The drone should track the subject even if it moves or turns to face another direction. Pilots can manipulate the drone's camera while the aircraft automatically follows a subject.

Such flying modes are popular with athletes like snowboarders and skiers, who use drones to capture previously impossible-to-get footage of their downhill runs. DJI says the tracking technology, called ActiveTrack, should work in most lightning conditions except nighttime.

The Phantom 4 sports design changes as well. The airframe is more streamlined and aerodynamic, its high-resolution 4K camera is more stable and offers better optics, and it has sturdier propellers that are easier to install. DJI's latest drone also packs a larger battery, giving it five extra minutes of flight time compared to the Phantom 3. A new Sport Mode lets the Phantom 4 travel as fast as 45 miles per hour.

DJI is launching its new consumer market Phantom as drones are increasing in popularity. The Consumer Technology Association previously estimated that roughly 700,000 drones would ship in the U.S. in 2015, representing an increase of 63% compared to 2014. As of January, the Federal Aviation had seen nearly 300,000 drone owners register their recreational unmanned aircraft.

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