



LUFTHANSA JUMBO REPORTS NEAR MISS WITH DRONE OVER LOS ANGELES

News / Airlines



The passenger jet was close to landing when a drone flew 200ft overhead, fuelling concerns about the safety of the craft.

The pilot of a Lufthansa passenger jumbo jet has reported that a drone aircraft nearly collided with his airliner on its landing approach to Los Angeles, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

The close encounter between the wide-body, four-engine Airbus A380 and the drone occurred at about 1.30pm at an altitude of 5,000ft (152 metres) as the unmanned aircraft passed about 200ft (61 meters) over the Lufthansa flight 14 miles (22.5 km) east of the city's international airport, the FAA said.

No evasive action was taken by the airline crew, and the plane, Lufthansa Flight 456, safely made its landing minutes later without further incident, according to FAA spokesman Ian Gregor.

The FAA immediately alerted the Los Angeles police department's air support division.

The number of passengers and crew aboard the plane was not reported by authorities, nor was the flight's origin.

US senator Dianne Feinstein of California, who has introduced legislation to require new safety features on drones, pointed to the close call as an example of the hazards posed to commercial aviation by unregulated drone activity.

"This is one more incident that could have brought down an airliner, and it's completely unacceptable," she said in a statement.

Federal regulations generally bar drone aircraft and model airplanes from flying higher than 400ft (122 meters) or within 5 miles (8 km) of an airport without first contacting air traffic control and airport authorities. Operators also must keep their drones away from other aircraft and groups of people.

The FAA has received at least 42 reports of drones flying unsafely near LAX, the nation's second-busiest airport, since April 2014, according to a Los Angeles Times analysis last fall of federal data released by Feinstein.

The data shows nearly 200 pilot reports of close encounters involving drones in California alone during the past two years, the most of any state, according to the Times.

In a 2014 letter to the FAA, Feinstein cited three instances in which drones flew dangerously close to passenger planes near major airports – two on the same day in May of that year at New York City's LaGuardia Airport and LAX, and another at JFK airport in New York in March 2013.

Responding to heightened concerns about rogue drone flights near airports, the FAA issued a rule in December requiring hobbyists as young as 13 to register their unmanned aircraft online with the government.

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