

Airplanes keep nearly missing drones. An actual collision could be disastrous.

A British Airways [mid-air collision with a drone](#) on Sunday has led to increased scrutiny over the regulations involved in piloting drones. In the United States alone, more than 150 planes have reported close sightings with drones in the last 18 months, with eight reports in the last two weeks of January alone.

"There is a reasonable, remote risk of a plane going down," aviation lawyer Steve Marks [told USA Today](#). "It would be irresponsible to ignore that danger."

While the British Airways collision didn't damage the plane, a drone's metal body and battery could potentially destroy an airliner's engine, knocking it out in a way similar to when geese took out the engine of a US Airways flight in 2009 and forced it to land in the Hudson River.

While Sunday's collision occurred near London Heathrow, a number of close calls have been reported in the U.S., too. In Miami, a drone came within 100 feet of a plane in January while on the same day, at 19,500 feet, an ExpressJet flight reported a drone 300 feet below and to the left of it. In the same month, a drone passed within 100 yards of a flight approaching Tucson at 3,700 feet, and was so large that the air traffic controllers could see it from their tower with binoculars.

"This is a real issue. This is a warning for the flying public, airlines, and operators that this can't be ignored any longer," Marks said. [Jeva Lange](#)