

PART 107 PILOTS · 2025 EDITION

Drone Services Pricing Guide

Industry rates, where your bid actually goes, three worked examples, and the factors that quietly eat your margin - distilled from the Rotor Rate pricing calculator.

Inside: 2025 rate ranges by service line · cost breakdown of a \$450 real-estate shoot · three full bid examples · what moves price up vs. what kills margin · pre-quote checklist · FAQ.

Get a defensible bid in under a minute: rotorrate.com/drone-services-pricing-calculator

What you plug in vs. what you get back

You plug in	You get back
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service line (real estate, mapping, inspection, film, etc.) • Flight, planning, drive & post-production hours • Equipment tier and amortization • Drive distance & mileage • Airspace class and waiver overhead • Overhead, insurance & target margin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bid: defensible quote, ready to send • Profit: real take-home after every cost • Benchmark: under-, on-, or over-market • Flat-rate verdict: will this package lose money on this job?

2025 drone service rates by industry

National ranges we see from Part 107 operators across Rotor Rate. Use the low end for fast turnaround, repeat clients, or saturated markets; the high end for complex airspace, RTK/LiDAR payloads, or stamped deliverables.

Service line	Typical billing	Low	Median	High
Real estate (residential)	Per shoot	\$150	\$350	\$650
Real estate (commercial)	Per shoot	\$400	\$850	\$1,800
Photography / brand	Per hour	\$150	\$275	\$500
Cinema / film	Per day	\$1,200	\$2,500	\$6,000+
Mapping / orthomosaic	Per acre	\$8	\$20	\$45
Roof / structural inspection	Per asset	\$175	\$400	\$900
Tower / cell inspection	Per tower	\$350	\$650	\$1,400
Solar inspection (thermal)	Per MW	\$300	\$600	\$1,200
Agriculture / NDVI	Per acre	\$2	\$5	\$12
Construction progress	Per visit	\$250	\$500	\$1,200

Ranges are directional, not legal floors. Rotor Rate's benchmark engine tunes these by service line, region, and complexity for each bid you build.

Where your bid actually goes

A typical **\$450 residential real-estate shoot**, broken down by where the money lands. This is what separates revenue from take-home - and why pilots who price on gut feel keep wondering where the profit went.

Line item	Share of bid	\$	%
Pilot time (fly + drive + edit, 3.5h)		\$175	39%
Equipment amortization		\$35	8%
Mileage & fuel (40 mi RT)		\$28	6%
Insurance & overhead allocation		\$36	8%
Processor fee (~3%)		\$14	3%
Take-home profit		\$162	36%

Take-home on this job: \$162 (36%). Drop the bid to \$350 - what platforms like FlyGuys often offer - and your take-home falls below \$70 once the platform cut and processor fees hit.

Three worked examples

REAL ESTATE	MAPPING	INSPECTION
<p>Suburban listing, 15 mi away</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 min on-site • 1h drive RT • 20 photos + 1 video edit • Class G airspace <hr/> <p>Bid \$425</p> <p>Take-home \$168</p>	<p>40-acre construction site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTK GCPs, 90 min flight • Pix4D processing 3h • Orthomosaic + DSM • LAANC required <hr/> <p>Bid \$1,150</p> <p>Take-home \$520</p>	<p>Cell tower, thermal + RGB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single 180' tower • 2h on-site, 1h report • Climber-equivalent deliverable • Class D LAANC <hr/> <p>Bid \$875</p> <p>Take-home \$395</p>

What moves the price up - and what kills it

<p>↑ Adds to the bid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled airspace requiring LAANC or further coordination • RTK, LiDAR, or thermal payloads (gear amortization) • Stamped deliverables (PE seal, orthomosaic, 3D model) • Tight turnaround (<24h) or weekend / after-hours • Travel beyond ~25 mi from home base 	<p>↓ Eats your margin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform cuts (FlyGuys, Zeitview): 20-30% off the top • Payment processor fees (~3%) on the gross • Unbilled re-flights for weather or client changes • Forgetting equipment amortization on a \$4-8k kit • Quoting flat rates without an acreage / time ceiling
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Pre-quote checklist

Run this once before you send any quote. If a line fails, fix it before the number leaves your inbox.

- Service line and deliverable scope are explicit (no scope creep gaps)
- Flight, drive, planning, and post-production hours are separately estimated
- Equipment amortization included (not just the airframe - batteries, payloads, software)
- Mileage costed at the IRS rate or higher, round-trip
- Airspace checked (LAANC, Further Coordination, TFRs) and added to the bid if it adds time
- Insurance + overhead allocated per job (not absorbed into 'profit')
- Target take-home set BEFORE the bid - not whatever's left
- Benchmark checked against industry range for the service line
- Re-flight policy stated in writing (weather, client changes)
- Deposit and payment terms set; platform/processor cuts modeled if applicable

FAQ

What does the drone services pricing calculator do?

It turns your job inputs (time, drive distance, equipment, airspace, overhead, target margin) into a bid you can defend, your real take-home profit, and a benchmark against industry rates for the same service line - in under a minute.

Is the calculator really free?

Yes. The full bid + profit calculator is free, no signup required. A paid subscription unlocks job tracking, mileage logging, and tax-ready exports - but you can price every job for free.

What service lines does it cover?

Real estate, photography, mapping, inspection, film, public safety, and general commercial work. The same formula applies; the inputs and benchmarks adjust to the service line you pick.

Do I need to know my hourly cost?

No. The calculator walks you through equipment amortization, overhead, and target take-home so the loaded hourly rate gets built for you.

PRICE THE NEXT JOB IN UNDER A MINUTE

Open the free calculator

Free, no signup. Built by Part 107 pilots, for Part 107 pilots.

rotorrate.com/drone-services-pricing-calculator