

Andrew J. Suda

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FAA-Certified UAS Pilot | Thermal Imaging Specialist | Emergency Ops Expert

Founder, Midwest Aerial Services

Professional Summary

FAA Part 107-certified UAS pilot with 9+ years of drone operations experience and a strong background in fireground safety, thermal imaging, and real-time risk assessment. Transitioned full-time into UAS inspection work in 2025 after 15 years in fire/EMS. Leverages real-world emergency operations experience to conduct precise, safety-driven infrastructure inspections. Trusted to perform aerial thermal scans, structural surveys, and utility risk assessments in high-stakes environments.

Certifications

FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot – sUAS License
Level I Infrared Thermographer – Infrared Training Center
Missouri Licensed Paramedic – ACLS, PALS, BLS
Firefighter I/II – State Certified
Hazmat Operations Level
Red Card – Wildland Firefighter

Technical Skills

Drone Operations: DJI, Autel, FLIR-enabled UAS platforms
Thermal Imaging: FLIR analysis for fire risk, hotspots, electrical load
FAA Compliance: LAANC, pre-flight checklists, airspace coordination
Infrastructure Inspection: Roofs, poles, transformers, post-fire assessment
Data Collection: Still/video capture, thermal overlays, GPS tagging
Emergency Risk Mitigation: Safe proximity planning, confined-area flight ops
Field-Ready: Physically fit, weather-ready, long-duration fieldwork capable

Professional Experience

Founder & UAS Pilot | Midwest Aerial Services | High Ridge, MO | June 2025 – Present

- Provide drone-based inspection services for infrastructure, utilities, and public safety agencies.
- Conduct thermal and visual inspections of rooftops, electrical equipment, and damaged structures.
- Deliver FAA-compliant reports, flight data, and video/thermal footage to clients.
- Specialize in post-incident site evaluation, including fire damage and electrical fault tracing.
- Consult on aerial strategy for risk detection and utility infrastructure assessments.

Firefighter/Paramedic & UAS Operator | Metro North Fire Protection District | St. Louis County, MO | 2017 – June 2025

- Operated drones on active firegrounds, hazmat scenes, and disaster response missions.
- Used thermal drones to identify hotspots and search for victims in no-visibility zones.
- Credited with life-saving drone deployment featured by FOX2 News and Fire Engineering Magazine.
- Partnered with Ameren crews during utility-related incidents for overhead evaluation and scene safety.

- Maintained UAS equipment and served as department drone operations lead.

Paramedic (Urban EMS) | St. Louis Fire Department | St. Louis, MO | 2014 – 2017

- Delivered ALS care during high-intensity 911 responses, often involving utility emergencies.
- Collaborated with law enforcement and infrastructure crews during large city events and critical scenes.

ED Paramedic & Technician | Cardinal Glennon & BJC Progress West | 2011 – 2014

- Provided emergency care and technical support in trauma center settings.
- Reinforced attention to detail and safety compliance — essential to flight and inspection work.

UAS Program Highlights

- 2021 – Drone thermal imaging used to locate fire victim in structure fire (covered by FOX2 News)
- 2021 – Jennings warehouse fire: UAS provided hazmat fire recon (Fire Engineering Magazine)
- Developed SOPs and training paths for fire department drone use (still in effect)

Education & Training

Infrared Training Center – Level I Thermographer (Public Safety/Inspection Focus)

St. Louis County Fire Academy – Firefighter I/II (Class 88, 2012)

Boone County EMS Program – Paramedic (2009–2010)

University of Missouri EMS Program – EMT-Basic (2006)

Strengths for UAS/Utility Inspection Work

- Safety-Driven: Deep understanding of structural risks and electrical hazards
- Thermal & Visual Expert: High-level interpretation of IR data, including fault tracing
- Real-World Ops Veteran: Emergency-tested in high-pressure environments
- Utility Collaboration: Experience working alongside Ameren and utility field crews
- Drone Discipline: Extensive preflight planning, FAA compliance, and SOP enforcement