

Swiss Post and Matternet to resume drone operations following interruption due to coronavirus

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From 27 August 2020, Swiss Post and drone systems developer Matternet will resume their drone operations to serve the healthcare sector. The move comes after the flights stopped during the coronavirus crisis. In Lugano, drones will fly as normal again from this date onwards. Swiss Post and Matternet expect to begin test flights on the University Hospital Zurich – University of Zurich Irchel Campus route on 31 August 2020. From September, Swiss Post drones are expected to regularly transport laboratory samples again between the two locations.

Swiss Post and drone systems developer Matternet had suspended the drone flights because of the coronavirus crisis. The drones will be back in the air from 27 August 2020. In Lugano, they will transport laboratory samples again on a daily basis from this date to serve the healthcare sector. The drones will connect the two hospitals, Ospedale Civico and Ospedale Italiano. The drones in Ticino have been grounded since mid-March, as the Ticino hospitals were pooling their staffing resources due to the coronavirus crisis.

In Zurich, Swiss Post and Matternet plan to carry out test flights between the University Hospital Zurich (USZ) and the University of Zurich (UZH) Irchel Campus from 31 August 2020, with the aim of reinstating the route between the locations. Swiss Post and Matternet made use of the interruption in flights to check the previous flight path. In consultation with FOCA, the flight path over the forest has been moved further east. From September, the drones in Zurich, too, are expected to regularly transport laboratory samples again between USZ and Irchel.

Recommendations from the expert board now fully implemented

Swiss Post places the utmost importance on safety in the field of drone logistics. For this reason, it has set up an expert board. The board is made up of independent aviation specialists and advises Swiss Post on safety matters. Following two incidents in 2019, the experts provided recommendations for increasing the safety of drone operations even further. Swiss Post and Matternet have now fully implemented these recommendations: Swiss Post will have its safety processes scrutinized on a continuous basis by an independent supervisory body. Matternet has further strengthened its existing safety team by employing a Head of Safety.

Flights to serve the healthcare sector

As a logistics specialist, Swiss Post wants to continue to harness the potential of drones – to the benefit of the healthcare sector in Switzerland. The advantages of drone logistics have now been proven: drones are quicker, more efficient and ecological than a

courier travelling by road. They are also unaffected by traffic jams. This means that they offer significant added value to patients, doctors and specialist staff, particularly in the health sector, where transport of items is often urgent. Swiss Post is performing worldwide pioneering work in autonomous

drone logistics that benefits patients. Pioneering work means that processes are continually being developed. Standards for drone use can be established thanks to the experiences of Swiss Post, and this can help the entire industry in Switzerland.

Source: [Swiss Post](#)

