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[CHP - Golden Gate Division Air Operations](#)

[December 7, 2015](#) ·

CHP Helicopter Nearly Collides with Drone over Martinez!

On December 5, 2015 just after 9:00 PM, CHP Helicopter H-32 was assisting the [Martinez Police Department](#) in searching for a reported stolen vehicle near SR-4 in Martinez. H-32 was approximately 700-800 feet above ground level when the crew's attention was drawn to a red light directly outside the aircraft. The red light was quickly determined to be a light on a drone at the same altitude as the helicopter, and was almost directly in front of the helicopter and very close. The CHP Helicopter pilot quickly took evasive action by veering to the right to avoid the imminent collision. The drone passed to the left of the helicopter at extremely close range.

H-32 circled back around to the left to reacquire sight of the drone. The crew located the drone and illuminated it with the helicopter's NightSun spotlight. The crew continued to follow the drone until it landed on Roux Court in Martinez. The CHP Flight Officer kept the drone in sight while he requested assistance from the Martinez Police Department. A Martinez Police Officer responded to the scene, contacted and identified the drone operator, and obtained his information in order to complete a report that will be forwarded to local and Federal authorities for review and possible prosecution. H-32's pilot remained in communication with the Concord Airport Control Tower during the time of the near miss and notified the tower of the incident, who made the appropriate notifications to the [Federal Aviation Administration](#). Unfortunately, after the near miss, H-32 was no longer able to assist with the search for the stolen vehicle.

As the holidays approach, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reportedly expects about one million drones to be given and received as gifts. These drones include many types of devices, from small quadcopters to manned aircraft of all sizes. The CHP reminds the public that these drones, regardless of the size, are a distinct danger to manned aircraft of all sizes. Please ensure these drones are being operated at safe altitudes and in a safe manner.