
Swiss Post to transport laboratory samples between University Hospital and University of Zurich

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Swiss Post will transport laboratory samples by drone on behalf of University Hospital Zurich and the University of Zurich from 10 December 2018. The first test flights will take place on 6 December.

Carrying laboratory samples, the drone will fly autonomously from one location to the other.

The two-and-a-half kilometre route will start from a roof terrace on the north wing of USZ, arrive at UZH Irchel at Winterthurerstrasse 190 and – where possible – will fly over a forested area. Around five to ten flights will take to the air on weekdays between 7:30 a.m. and 4:45 p.m.

The drone will not fly between 22 December 2018 and 6 January 2019.

Compared to a courier on the road, the drone is able to travel the Zurich route twice as quickly, is more environmentally friendly and is unaffected by the traffic situation. Particularly in the medical sector, consignments are often urgent and the speed at which they are delivered can be crucial.

“We are integrating drones into our logistics chain because we can transport laboratory samples quicker and with greater flexibility. This does not just shorten waiting times for our patients but also for the doctors and other healthcare professionals in the hospital”, says Renate Gröger, Director of Operations at University Hospital Zurich.

USZ, UZH, Swiss Post and Matternet will continually evaluate the progress of the project and will decide whether any adjustments are needed.

In cooperation with FOCA and Skyguide

Safety during drone transportation is the utmost priority for all involved. The drone therefore features modern redundant safety systems, including a collision warning system. It has an on-board camera.

Each drone project will be carried out in close collaboration with the FOCA, Skyguide and municipal authorities to ensure strict compliance with the regulatory framework conditions.

In the future, drones will complement traditional parcel delivery and mail carriers where required, but it will not replace them. Special transport operations, such as blood samples, are at the center of Swiss Post drone logistics.

By using drone transport, Swiss Post is simply doing what it has been undertaking in its 170-year history: transporting goods from A to B. It is only the form of transport which has changed.

What used to be performed by stagecoach is now a niche area for drones. Swiss Post is expanding its fields of business with new digital solutions, and is a pioneer in autonomous drone logistics in Switzerland.

Swiss Post is now also permitted to carry out drone flights in bad weather.