



Federal Aviation  
Administration

## The Risk Is Real

Construction of meteorological and other towers in rural areas throughout the United States is a concern to many in the aviation industry. Often these towers do not have lights or other marking devices, and they are just under 200 feet tall—falling outside FAA regulations governing tall structures. The dull color and small footprint can make these uncharted towers difficult to see. In addition, they can be erected in hours, making these vertical obstacles a major safety risk to helicopter emergency medical evacuation services, aerial applicators, law enforcement, aerial firefighting, predator control, pipeline patrols, aerial wildlife surveys, military operations, and others.

The number of meteorological, cell phone, wind energy, and other towers erected in agricultural regions throughout the United States has increased significantly during the past several years. Due to the expected growth in the wind energy industry, the increase is projected to continue. Remember, adhere to 14 CFR 91.119 Minimum Safe Altitudes.

# TOWERS

**Unlit + Unmarked + Uncharted =  
Undetected**

*The Danger of Towers to  
Our Aviation Community*

**[www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov)**  
Your Aviation Safety Web Site

**FAA**Team  
FAA SAFETY TEAM

# Four Safety Tips Help You Avoid Meteorological Towers

## 1. Towers can be erected in hours!

Ag operators and pipeline flyers returning to a field after a few days or a few hours may find a tower that wasn't there earlier.

## 2. Towers may have a small footprint!

The small size may leave little ground disturbance (footprint) to indicate the tower's presence. At times, however, the footprint may be easier to spot than the tower itself!

## 3. The tower color may be difficult to see!

Many towers are just under 200 feet tall, dull gray, and unlit, and they do not have markers to note any support cables. Check the Internet to see if your state maintains a tower registry, and check your route as part of the preflight.

## 4. Ferry above 5 and stay alive!

Aerial application's Professional Aerial Applicators' Support System® (PAASS) safety program slogan reminds pilots to fly above 500 feet except when the operation requires flying at a lower altitude. Because meteorological towers can be 500 feet or more, if not dispensing, climb to a planned cruise altitude above known obstacles.

[www.FAASafety.gov](http://www.FAASafety.gov)



*Many towers are just below 200 feet in height, only a few inches in diameter, and unlit, making them very difficult to see from the air.*