

# Amazon looks at dropping packages onto your patio from as high as 25 feet

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It's not that drones get tired, it's just that if they're delivering your box of cat food and low-rise socks, dropping down to put it on your patio and flying back up for the next delivery takes power that they need to conserve.

Better to just hover over your home and drop the box, a new patent from Amazon proposes.

And no need to cover your head: the Seattle e-commerce giant has that—and the [delivery](#) box full of your precious items—covered, at least in theory.

Amazon on Tuesday received a patent for cushioning packages with inflatable airbags, so they can be dropped from as high as 25 feet.

The drone could inflate the "airlift package protection airbag" with a gas canister or even just from the downdraft from the aircraft's propellers, while in transit or "near a drop location, such as a backyard or patio of a residential dwelling," the patent said.

This patent, like at least two others Amazon has received, also envisions the possibility of catastrophic mid-air failure. The airbag for the package could be inflated automatically if a drone—also known as an unmanned-aerial vehicle or UAV, "becomes unresponsive to controls and/or loses some or all power" if the drone "contacts an object, a building, and/or the ground."

Should you be, say, barbecuing on your patio when your delivery drone appears, there's no reason to fear, but if you want your package, you'll need to get out of the way—and take your bottles of beer with you—so it can fall from the sky. The drone could use cameras and other sensors to make sure the "drop zone" is empty of people, animals and "fragile objects," and decline to make the delivery till all is clear, according to the patent.

A drone could even be constructed in such a way that it could let loose a package that would travel "partially horizontally," to land on "an elevated balcony of a tall building."

The airbag Amazon envisions would deflate slightly upon impact with the ground to cushion the landing and protect a package's contents.

Energy consumption is an important consideration for drones, which "may conserve energy if they minimize changes in altitude," the [patent](#) says in explaining why dropping packages from the sky makes sense.

Height range for the release of packages from a drone would range from five to 25 feet, "depending on the size and weight of the [package](#)."

Amazon, keenly focused on automation and cheap, efficient product delivery, has obtained dozens of drone-related patents in recent years, but it remains to be seen whether this latest one, or any of the others, will lead to technology used in [drone](#) deliveries.

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