

BIG LAKE POLICE DEPARTMENT SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

Operations 200-24
October 2018

I. PURPOSE

This policy is intended to provide personnel who are assigned responsibilities associated with the deployment and use of small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) with instructions on when and how this technology and the information it provides may be used for law enforcement and public safety purposes in accordance with law.¹

II. POLICY

It is the policy of this department that duly trained and authorized agency personnel may deploy sUAS when such use is appropriate in the performance of their official duties, and where deployment and use, and the collection and use of any audio/video recordings or other data originating from or generated by the sUAS, comport with the policy provisions provided herein and applicable law.

III. DEFINITIONS

Digital Multimedia Evidence (DME): Digital recording of images, sounds, and associated data.

Model Aircraft: A remote controlled aircraft used by hobbyists that is built, produced, manufactured, and operated for the purposes of sport, recreation, and/or competition.

Unmanned Aircraft (UA) or Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV): An aircraft that is intended to navigate in the air without an on-board pilot. Also alternatively called Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV), or Drone.

Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS): A system that includes the necessary equipment, network, and personnel to control an unmanned aircraft.

Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS): UAS systems that utilize UAVs weighing less than 55 pounds and are consistent with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations governing model aircraft.

UAS Flight Crewmember: A pilot, visual observer, payload operator or other person assigned duties for a UAS for the purpose of flight or training exercise.

Unmanned Aircraft Pilot: A person exercising control over a UA/UAV/UAS during flight.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Administration

Deployments of sUAS should be supervisory personnel when practical. This agency has adopted the use of sUAS to provide an aerial visual perspective in responding to emergency situations and exigent circumstances, and for the following objectives:

1. Situational Awareness: To assist decision makers in understanding the nature, scale, and scope of an incident—and for planning and coordinating an effective response.
 2. Search and Rescue: To assist missing person investigations, and other search and rescue missions.
 3. Tactical Deployment: To support the tactical deployment of officers and equipment in emergency situations (e.g., incidents involving hostages and barricades, support for large-scale tactical operations, and other temporary perimeter security situations).
 4. Visual Perspective: To provide an aerial visual perspective to assist officers in providing direction for crowd control, traffic incident management, special circumstances, and temporary perimeter security.
 5. Scene Documentation: To document a crime scene, accident scene, or other major incident scene (e.g., disaster management, incident response, large-scale forensic scene investigation).
 6. Other usages deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police.
- B. Procedures for sUAS Use
1. The agency must obtain applicable authorizations, permits, or certificates required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) prior to deploying or operating the sUAS, and these authorizations, permits, and certificates shall be maintained and current.
 2. The sUAS will be operated only by personnel (pilots and crew members) who have been trained in the operation of the system.
 3. The sUAS-certified personnel shall inspect and test sUAS equipment prior to each deployment to verify the proper functioning of all equipment and the airworthiness of the device.
 4. The sUAS equipment is the responsibility of individual officers and will be used with reasonable care to ensure proper functioning. Equipment malfunctions shall be brought to the attention of the officer's supervisor as soon as possible so that an appropriate repair can be made or a replacement unit can be procured.
 5. The sUAS equipment and all data, images, video, and metadata captured, recorded, or otherwise produced by the equipment is the sole property of the agency.
 6. Where there are specific and articulable grounds to believe that the sUAS will collect evidence of criminal wrongdoing and/or if the sUAS will be used in a manner that may intrude upon reasonable expectations of privacy, the agency will obtain a search warrant prior to conducting the flight.
- C. Restrictions on Using the sUAS
1. The sUAS shall be deployed and used only to support official law enforcement and public safety missions unless specifically approved by the Chief of Police.
 2. The sUAS shall not be operated in an unsafe manner or in violation of FAA rules.
- D. DME Retention and Management
1. All DME shall be handled in accordance with existing policy on data and record retention, where applicable.
 2. Data captured as evidence for an investigation, shall be uploaded to that case file in accordance with BLPD Evidence Processing Policies.

3. All other data captured will be retained for a period of 30 days per Minnesota Data Practices.
- E. sUAS Supervision and Reporting
1. When practical supervisory personnel shall manage all deployments, and uses of sUAS to ensure that officers equipped with sUAS devices utilize them in accordance with policy and procedures defined herein.
- F. Training
1. Police personnel who are assigned sUAS must complete an agency-approved training program to ensure proper use and operations. Additional training may be required at periodic intervals to ensure the continued effective use and operation and proper calibration and performance of the equipment and to incorporate changes, updates, or other revisions in policy and equipment.
 2. All agency personnel with sUAS responsibilities shall also be trained in the local and federal laws and regulations, as well as policies and procedures governing the deployment and use of sUAS.