

GRAND ISLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT. POLICY AND USE OF UAV

SUBJECT: UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE USE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

EFFECTIVE DATE: 01/01/2014

APPROVED: 
Sheriff Grand Isle County, Vermont

I. POLICY / MISSION STATEMENT

It is the policy of Grand Isle County Sheriff's Dept. to utilize Unmanned Aerial Vehicle's (UAV's) for the focused and limited purpose of search & rescue missions or public safety. UAV's, related equipment and technology, and data collected from their deployment shall be used in a lawful manner consistent with all provisions of the United States and Vermont Constitutions. It is also the policy of this agency to allow for the deployment of UAV's for emergency use approved by the Sheriff or designee.

MISSION STATEMENT PRESERVATION OF LIFE

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish minimum standards on the use and oversight of UAV's for this agency.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV): Means an aircraft that is operated without a physical human presence within or on the aircraft which, in the manner in which it is used or the manner in which it is equipped, is capable of performing a visual surveillance of a search area and guided by remote control.

VI. PROCEDURES - General

A law enforcement officer (LEO) of this agency shall be allowed to use UAV's for a search & rescue mission or public safety purposes, providing the requirements below are followed:

A. Prior to the deployment of the UAV, a LEO must be adequately trained in its use and operation, and must be knowledgeable of the standards set forth in this policy.

- B. Any operation by a LEO of this agency of the UAV must fully comply with all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements and guidelines, including the acquisition of a Certificate of Authorization or Waiver from the FAA, as well as with any other applicable law.
- C. A LEO may not deploy the UAV for criminal investigative purposes without the knowledge and permission of the Sheriff of this agency.

Prior to deploying a UAV for search & rescue mission a minimum of a two-person team will assemble and deploy the uav. Both team members will monitor and communicate with each other on their observations and strategies during mission.

- D. A LEO that deploys the UAV shall properly document each such deployment on the appropriate agency report forms. Such documentation must include at a minimum:
 1. The date, time(s) and purpose of each deployment.
 2. The location, weather and other assets involved
 3. A review of incident will be conducted after completion of mission involving all assets involved.
- E. A LEO that deploys the UAV must have the capability to adequately track and record the flight pattern and location of the UAV.
- F. The use of the uav when a manned aircraft is involved in the search & rescue mission. Communications will be established and the manned aircraft will have priority of air space. Uav will not deploy without notification and permission of manned aircraft.
- G. The request and deployment of the UAV by other Agencies and or Jurisdictions will be approved by the Sheriff or Designee.
- H. A LEO that intentionally uses the UAV without proper authorization or in deviation of the standards set forth in this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

VII. PROCEDURES - Avoiding Hazards

- A. The UAV deployed in an area in close proximity to persons, objects or to private property must be equipped with the capability to safely stabilize the flight in the event that the operator cannot control or observe the UAV.

- B. A LEO deploying the UAV at an altitude that might reasonably be expected to cause the UAV to encounter, and possibly harm persons or objects, must keep the UAV subject to observation at all times, in order to minimize the risk of such encounters.