

Unmanned Aerial System

613.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The UC Davis Police Department Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) will be used to assist first responders in enhancing public safety by providing an aerial perspective. This will be key to improved situational awareness in a multitude of situations. Deploying an unmanned aircraft system equipped with real-time video of high-definition cameras and/or Forward Looking InfraRed (FLIR) systems will help detect dangers that otherwise may not be visible. The ability to provide this aerial view will enhance officer safety without placing additional first responders at risk. It will provide key information to leaders allowing them to make better decisions regarding the deployment of resources, safety messaging to the public, etc.

The UAS utilized for this policy qualify under the University of California Drone Policy as Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (SUAS) which means an unmanned aircraft weighing less than 55 lbs. and associated elements that are required to operate safely and efficiently in the National Airspace System.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and protocol for the deployment and use of the Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) including the retention and/or destruction of digital recordings obtained in accordance with applicable Federal law, State law, and University of California guidelines.

613.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Certificate of Authorization (COA): Given by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) granting permission to fly the UAS within specific boundaries and perimeters.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA): The national aviation authority of the United States, with powers to regulate all aspects of the National Airspace System (NAS).

Observer: Anyone who is trained and authorized to maintain visual observation of the UAS while in flight.

Pilot: A member of the UC Davis Police Department who is trained, certified, and authorized to serve as a "Remote Pilot in Command" of the UAS while in flight.

UC UAS Policy: The existing University of California Unmanned Aircraft System (Drone) Policy that establishes the University oversight and minimum record-keeping requirements for UAS. Establishes Designated Local Authorities at each University Location and a Systemwide Designated UAS Authority to provide oversight.

Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) - An unmanned aircraft of any type that is capable of sustaining directed flight, whether preprogrammed or remotely controlled, and all the supporting or attached systems designed for gathering information through imaging, recording, or any other means. May also be referred to as a drone, or an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV).

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613.2 POLICY

Unmanned Aircraft Systems may be utilized to enhance the department's mission of protecting lives and property. Any use of a UAS will be in strict accordance with constitutional and privacy rights and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations. Safety, above all else, is the primary concern in every operation, regardless of the nature of the mission.

All flight operations made by the Department are subject to Department protocols for pilot training, mission planning, impacts to privacy, flight authorization, flight documentation, accident or incident reporting and data management. A Program Coordinator will be appointed by the Chief of Police to develop appropriate protocols and manage the UAS Program.

This policy satisfies the requirement for the UC UAS policy exemption from advanced approval from the Designated Local Authority or Systemwide Designated UAS Authority during an exigent or emergency situation.

613.3 PRIVACY

The use of the UAS potentially involves privacy considerations. Personnel will consider the protection of individual civil rights and the reasonable expectation of privacy as a key component of any decision made to deploy the UAS. Pilots and observers shall take reasonable precautions to avoid inadvertently recording or transmitting images that infringe upon an individual's right to privacy. This includes consideration by the Pilot on when to turn on/off the recording function, and the route of the UAS during deployment.

613.4 CHIEF OF POLICE

The Chief of Police, or their designee, is responsible for the following:

- Communicating the Department's commitment to safety, privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.
- Oversight of the UAS Program and reviewing periodic reports and audits on the program.
- Appointing a Program Coordinator who will be responsible for the management of the UAS Program.

613.5 PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Program Coordinator will ensure that policies and procedures conform to current laws, regulations, and best practices and will have the following additional responsibilities:

- Coordinating the FAA Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) application process and ensuring that the COA is current.
- Ensuring that all authorized pilots and required observers have completed all required FAA and department-approved training in the operation, applicable laws, policies, and procedures regarding use of the UAS.
- Developing uniform protocol for submission and evaluation of requests to deploy a UAS, including urgent requests made during ongoing or emerging incidents.

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- Developing protocol for conducting criminal investigations involving a UAS, including documentation of time spent monitoring a subject.
- Implementing a system for public notification of UAS deployment.
- Developing an operational protocol governing the deployment and operation of a UAS including but not limited to safety oversight, use of visual observers, establishment of lost link procedures, and secure communication with air traffic control facilities.
- Developing a protocol for fully documenting all missions and reviewing flight mission reports for continual program improvement.
- Developing a quarterly UAS inspection, maintenance, and record-keeping protocol to ensure continuing airworthiness of a UAS, up to and including its overhaul or life limits.
- Developing protocols to ensure that all data intended to be used as evidence are accessed, maintained, stored, and retrieved in a manner that ensures its integrity as evidence, including strict adherence to chain of custody requirements. Electronic trails, including encryption, authenticity certificates, and date and time stamping, shall be used as appropriate to preserve individual rights and to ensure the authenticity and maintenance of a secure evidentiary chain of custody.
- Developing an appropriate standard for evaluating privacy considerations.
- Maintaining a central repository of the authorized protocols for the UAS program.
- Coordinating with the Director of Administrative Support Services to ensure retention and purge periods are maintained in accordance with established records retention schedules.
- Facilitating law enforcement access to images and data captured by the UAS.
- Recommending program enhancements, particularly regarding safety and information security.
- Ensuring that established protocols are followed by monitoring and providing periodic reports on the program to the Chief of Police or their designee.
- Assisting with the report and inventory in accordance with the Annual Military Equipment Policy (Lexipol 709).
- Maintaining familiarity with FAA regulatory standards, state laws and regulations, and local ordinances regarding the operations of a UAS.

The Chief will appoint a Team Supervisor who is a sergeant assigned to assist with the Program Coordinator and their roles and responsibilities.

613.6 DEPARTMENT PILOT AND OBSERVER

Pilots are responsible for the safe and efficient conduct of their UAS flight operation. The Pilot is responsible for the following:

- Operating the Department UAS in a safe and secure manner according to all local, state, and Federal regulations.

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- Performing pre-flight and post-flight debriefings and safety checks of the UAS and other associated systems.
- Ensuring the safety of the flight crew (Pilot and Observer) and the general public during operation.
- Abiding by Department standards for evaluating privacy impacts.
- Complying with Department protocols for deployment and documentation of flight missions.
- Submitting post-flight documentation, including any accident or injury reports.
- Ensuring that all flight crew members are qualified and sufficiently proficient for their position and the flight mission.
- Ensuring the completion and approval of appropriate documentation (flight waivers, airspace authorizations, etc.).

Observer's role is to assist in the safe and effective operation of the UAS. The Observer roles include:

- Assist the Pilot in avoiding obstacles.
- Remain alert for safety issues surrounding the Pilot and Observer.
- Any additional duties as assigned by the Remote Pilot in Command.

613.7 DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS AND PROCEDURE

Requests to deploy Unmanned Aircraft Systems will be forwarded to the Watch Commander or their designee for approval. Once approved by the Watch Commander or designee, only the authorized pilot shall make the final determination whether to deploy.

Use of vision enhancement technology (e.g., thermal and other imaging equipment not generally available to the public) is permissible in viewing areas only where there is no protectable privacy interest or when in compliance with a search warrant or court order. In all other instances where there is no exception to a warrantless search, legal counsel should be consulted by the Watch Commander. The UAS will be configured to be readily identifiable by the public by the appropriate use of markings.

Each deployment of the UAS will be properly documented. Such documentation will include, at a minimum, the date, pilot(s), location, flight time, purpose of the deployment, and any accidents.

613.8 CREW TRAINING AND CURRENCY

To ensure the Department can operate at the highest level of safety and proficiency, only authorized operators who have successfully completed and passed the required initial training shall be permitted to operate the Department UAS. The Program Coordinator is responsible for developing and authorizing training programs and requirements.

- All pilots must complete an approved 'hands-on' basic flight training on the Department UAS under the direct supervision of an Authorized Training Operator.

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- All pilots must complete an approved Part 107 Knowledge Test Prep Course and receive their FAA Remote Pilot Certificate with SUAS rating prior to serving as an aircraft operator for any Department flight operation.
- Training and demonstration flights of the UAS shall be conducted over areas under Department control or a public use area.

613.9 USE OF UAS

All UAS operations shall be conducted under the FAA Regulations, Part 107, unless a COA is obtained and otherwise specifies conditions for operation.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems may be authorized for deployment under the following circumstances:

- Public safety and life preservation missions including, but not limited to, barricade situations, active shooters, apprehension of fleeing persons suspected of crimes involving violence, weapons, or who pose a risk of serious harm.
- Investigative scenes.
- Missing persons incidents.
- Traffic collision investigations and reconstruction.
- Search and rescue operations.
- Disaster scene incidents.
- Hazmat incidents.
- Suspected explosive devices.
- Pursuant to a warrant (search or arrest).
- Special events, mass gatherings where security concerns exist, or criminal activity is occurring.
- Outside public agency assists.
- Training or demonstration missions.
- Mutual aid support when the underlying missions meet the uses outlined in this policy.

613.10 PROHIBITED USE

The UAS video surveillance equipment shall not be used:

- To conduct random surveillance activities.
- To target a person based solely on actual or perceived characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, or disability.
- To harass, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual or group.
- To conduct personal business of any type.

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In an agreement with the UC Regents, the UC Davis Police Department will not fly a UAS over a peaceful march or protest without the authorization of the Chancellor or their designee.

Prohibited use of UAS apply to mutual aid when the underlying missions meet the prohibited uses outlined in this policy.

The UAS shall not be weaponized.

613.11 EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND RETENTION

Data collected by the UAS shall be retained as provided in the established records retention schedule and in accordance with the UC Police Department Policy. Any video or audio data collected by a UAS in the course of a flight which is relevant to a criminal investigation or critical incident shall be maintained in accordance with UC and Campus records retention policies. Any video or audio data that is not evidence or relevant to a criminal investigation or critical incident shall be retained for 180 days before being destroyed. Flight data to include, but not limited to: GPS, speed, altitude, and path traveled will be retained as flight logs, either electronically or in print format.

613.12 ACCIDENT REPORTING

It is the policy of the Department that all pilots must immediately report any UAS incident that results in injury or property damage to their Watch Commander or designee, and to the Designated Local Authority or Systemwide Designated UAS Authority as soon as possible. A report must be made regardless of whether damage to the object can be determined by the operator in the field.

613.13 RELATED INFORMATION

[FAA Website on Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(US Specific\)](#)

[UC UAS Website](#)

[UC UAS Policy](#)

[UC Davis Safety Services Drone Information](#)

[UC Davis AB 481 Policy](#)