BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Approved Units for Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS)

Office of the Police Commissioner

VERSION - May 19, 2026

Special Operations Section (SOS)

Approved Units: Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT)

An sUAS may be utilized in the following circumstances, operations, or incidents to protect the sanctity of human life, provide enhanced situational awareness, and maximize public safety:

- Barricaded Persons
- Hostage Rescue
- Active Shooter
- High Risk Raid
- Search and Rescue
- Special Events/Large Gatherings (e.g., permitted events, sports events, unpermitted large gatherings that require a public safety response, etc.)
- Locating a suspect who is believed to be hiding in a specific and defined area, who is believed to be armed with a weapon, where attempting to physically locate would put a SOS team member, other law enforcement officer or civilian at risk of death and/or serious bodily injury; and surveillance and containment are generally the safest tactics for apprehending the suspect. (Refer to BPD Policy 1505, *Foot Pursuits*)
- Exigent circumstances to protect life.
- Training for approved missions through practical sUAS exercises and scenarios. Training may be conducted jointly with other authorized BPD units.
- Technology testing, proficiency testing, performance checks, maintenance flights, and other types of missions to ensure the validity of technology for BPD use.

- Community outreach events hosted by or in collaboration with the Baltimore Police Department.

The Police Commissioner may approve the use of an sUAS for specific incidents, circumstances, or operations beyond the use cases listed above.

All SOS sUAS deployments shall be conducted in a manner that protects individual civil rights and reasonable expectations of privacy.

Crime Scene Sciences and Evidence Section

Approved Units: Crime Scene Unit (CSU)

An sUAS may be utilized in the following circumstances, operations, or incidents to protect the sanctity of human life, provide enhanced situational awareness, and maximize public safety:

- Crime scene documentation once a crime scene has been established and secured.
- Training for approved missions through practical sUAS exercises and scenarios. Training may be conducted jointly with other authorized BPD units.
- Technology testing, proficiency testing, performance checks, maintenance flights, and other types of missions to ensure the validity of technology for BPD use.
- Additional utilization of the sUAS by the CSU to collect evidence at a scene being investigated after a recent incident (subject to CSU's chain of command approval).
- Exigent circumstances to protect life.
- Community outreach events hosted by or in collaboration with the Baltimore Police Department.
- Special Events/Large Gatherings (e.g., permitted events, sports events, unpermitted large gatherings that require a public safety response, etc.)

The Police Commissioner may approve the use of an sUAS for specific incidents, circumstances, or operations beyond the use cases listed above.

All CSU sUAS deployments shall be conducted in a manner that protects individual civil rights and reasonable expectations of privacy.