Boulder Police Department Policy and Procedure

	Subject: Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)		**General Order:** 245
	Effective: July 22, 2026 **Reviewed:** July 1, 2026	**Replaces:** GO 245 October 22, 2024	**Approved by:** Chief Stephen Redfearn
General Order Topic(s): **245-1** Personnel **245-2** Training **245-3** Operations **245-4** Additional Guidelines		**Accreditation Standard(s): N/A** **Statutory References:** C.R.S B.R.C **Related General Orders:**	

POLICY

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) and for the storage, retrieval and dissemination of images and data captured by the UAS. It is the Boulder Police Department's (BPD) policy to utilize UAS's to augment traditional public safety techniques and resources. UAS platforms are operated by BPD designated trained and qualified UAS pilots. The systems can be equipped to provide real-time and/or stored-video reconnaissance to incident commanders, coordinators, etc., provide communications-relay capabilities and documentation for evidentiary purposes. UAS's, related equipment and technology and data collected from their deployment shall be collected and used in a lawful manner consistent with all provisions of the United States and Colorado Constitutions. UAS platforms are unarmed.

UAS platforms may assist with search and rescue, fires, flood, and other natural disaster reconnaissance, in support of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Boulder Fire Department (BFD) and BPD by providing a needed visual perspective not available by other means. BPD may deploy a UAS platform in a safe, efficient, effective, and legal manner during public safety events.

This policy is in addition to other UAS guidelines, Federal Aviation Administration Regulations, aircraft UAS manufacturers' approved flight manuals, the BPD flight manual and applicable BPD or City of Boulder policies, laws, or regulations.

DEFINITIONS

AIRCRAFT FLIGHT LOG-An electronic and/or written record of a flight, normally showing flight planning information together with actual data recorded during the flight.

Certificate of Waiver (COW)-An FAA official document allowing the Remote Pilot in Command of an Unmanned Aircraft System to deviate from specific Federal Aviation's Regulations, such as Part 107, provided they demonstrate the proposed operations can be conducted safely.

Drone as First Responder (DFR)-A public safety program utilizing strategically positioned drones that respond to calls for service and provide real-time aerial situational awareness to responding officers.

Drone as First Responder Operator (DFRO)-Operates drones in response to calls for service or other authorized purposes in accordance with department policy governing Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS)-Unmanned Aircraft Systems operations where the drone is flown outside the visual line of sight of the Remote Pilot in Command.

FAA (FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION) FLIGHT CERTIFICATION LEVEL-Compliance with applicable FAA regulations that determine UAS operational limitations.

FLIGHT CREW MEMBER-Personnel who ensure safety during the flight of a UAS.

NTSB-National Transportation Safety Board

REMOTE PILOT-IN-COMMAND (RPIC)-[UAS]-The person who has final authority and responsibility for the operation and safety of flight, has been designated as RPIC before or during the flight, and holds the appropriate category, class, and type rating, if appropriate, for the flight.

SME (SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT)-An expert in the deployment, operation, and legal requirements of UAS platforms and related hardware and software systems.

UAS Pilot-An individual designated by BPD to operate an unmanned aircraft system and trained and certified in its use.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)-The aircraft and related hardware and software components needed for the successful deployment and operation of an unmanned aircraft capable of providing still and video images and/or real- time aerial views of a designated area or object.

VISUAL OBSERVER (VO)-A person acting as a flight crew member who assists the UAS RPIC and the person manipulating the controls to see and avoid other air traffic or objects aloft or on the ground.

PROCEDURES

245-1 Personnel

A. The chief or designee assigns a qualified member of BPD to act as the UAS Program Manager. This individual is responsible for oversight of the program including adherence to all regulatory requirements, development, pilot training, and liaison with the FAA and other agencies related to the BPD UAS Program, and supervision and management of the PSIC.

B. The program manager or their designee may designate any qualified member of BPD, or other law enforcement agency as approved, as the RPIC for any UAS flight event. A VO may be used to ensure and/or increase operational safety during flight operations. A VO may or may not be a RPIC.

C. Pilots: A pilot's primary duty is the safe, legal and effective operation of the UAS in accordance with General Order 245, the flight manual of the manufacturer and FAA regulations. The BPD UAS program pilots must obtain and maintain all appropriate FAA certifications and requirements as outlined in the FAA UAS flight regulations. Pilots must

remain fully aware of all FAA regulations, applicable BPD policies and the UAS manufacturers' approved flight manual. Failure to remain current in this area, including both criminal and civil legal issues associated with the protections of the 4th Amendment, is grounds for removal from flight status.

The assignment and removal of any BPD employee, outside agency employee or volunteer to the UAS program is the prerogative of the operations deputy chief.

245-2 Training

A. Qualified personnel, in accordance with applicable policies and procedures, conduct the initial and ongoing training of personnel assigned to the UAS program.

B. The program manager or designee, documents all training related to the UAS program in accordance with applicable BPD policies and procedures.

C. Instructors conduct training in a safe manner and way that minimizes the negative impact on members of the public.
   1. The UAS program manager or designee, in consultation with the UAS Team Commander, designates UAS pilots to organize and execute proficiency exercises on a recurring basis.
   2. The UAS program manager or designee identifies additional training requirements and collaborates with the BPD training sergeant to obtain qualified instructors to perform required training.

D. The program manager or designee, is responsible for monitoring FAA regulations and the development of curriculum and training as required, ensuring program compliance with FAA regulations.

245-3 Operations

A. A request for a UAS operation follows the below listed protocol:
   1. When time permits, submit the request in writing to the program manager or designee, and
   2. Requests for flights outside the city limits require approval from the on-duty Commander or a designee (SDO) when practical. An on-duty supervisor may give authorization for matters of urgency.

B. A request for a UAS operations from an outside agency follows normal BPD mutual aid request procedures prior to submission to the UAS team.

C. All UAS missions shall be performed in accordance with department policy and current FAA regulations. An FAA waiver is required before undertaking any deviation from BPD's current flight certification level. The program manager or designee is responsible for the initiation of the waiver application when it is determined that the use of a UAS may aid in the resolution of a planned or real-time event.

D. RPIC Responsibilities
   1. The RPIC is the final authority over the operation of the unmanned aircraft.

2. Pilots are responsible for compliance with this policy, General Order 245-3 and FAA Regulations.

E. Safety Guidelines
   1. Any mission or training exercise must be terminated when the situation changes in such a way that safety guidelines are exceeded or compromised.
   2. In order to ensure the safest flight conditions, all UAS Flights must be performed in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations and guidelines as well as industry's best practice.
   3. The program manager or designee is responsible for scheduling an annual safety review. All members of the UAS program team are required to participate in the review of the program and identify hazards, review program safety criteria, program procedures and conduct safety and other training identified. The program manager or designee, is responsible for establishing inspection and maintenance schedules, following accepted best practices, related to all UAS equipment.

F. Incident Reporting Procedures

Any unmanned aircraft event that causes injury to any person, damage to private property or to UAS equipment is reported through the management structure of the UAS program. This is in addition to any other reporting or documentation requirements imposed by law, FAA and/or NTSB regulation or BPD policy.

245-4 Additional Guidelines

A. UAS recordings are the property of BPD and may be evidence. Digital evidence is handled in accordance with General Order 207.

B. UASs that are not owned or authorized by the department are not deployed at on- duty police department operations, without specific authorization from the Chief of Police or a designee.

C. Personal use of a department owned UAS is prohibited.

D. The department may take videos or photographs of various activities, incidents or crime scenes that are intended to be used for historical, educational, or informational purposes.