



---

**GENERAL ORDERS:** Chapter 32

**PUBLISHED DATE:** 7/12/2021

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 7/12/2021

**APPROVED BY:** Chief Dana Wingert

**REVISED DATE:**

---

## **Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS)**

### **I. Purpose**

This policy will provide guidelines for the use of authorized Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS). The sUAS will support departmental operations by providing aerial observations of law enforcement and other public safety incidents.

### **II. Policy**

The operational deployment of an sUAS will be for specific public safety missions, in compliance with all applicable laws while respecting the privacy of the citizens we serve, and only by trained and authorized employees. This policy is not intended to be all-inclusive, but instead shall serve as a supplement to other policies and procedures, applicable national aviation authority regulations, and sUAS manufacturer's user manuals.

### **III. Definitions**

Digital Media Evidence – Digital recordings of images, sounds, and associated data

Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC) – The individual with the final authority and responsibility for operation and safety of an sUAS operation.

Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) – An unmanned aircraft and its associated elements, including communication links and the components that control the aircraft that are required for safe and efficient operation.

Unmanned Aircraft – An aircraft that is operated without direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft. Also called remote piloted aircraft or drones.

Visual Observer – An sUAS flight crew member designated by the RPIC to assist with the responsibility to identify and avoid other air traffic or objects in the air or on the ground.

### **IV. Procedures**

#### **A. Authorized flight missions and use**

1. To provide aerial visual support and images of public safety operations when requested, such as, but not limited to:
  - a. Search and rescue or recovery operations
  - b. Search for missing persons
  - c. Documentation of crime and accident scenes
  - d. Surveillance and documentation of damage caused by natural or manmade disaster events
  - e. Aiding commanders in managing public safety operations, or as approved by the Chief of Police or designee

- f. Assessments of crowd control situations or to aid in identifying safety issues
  - g. Hazardous material incidents or in other areas considered hazardous for employee presence
  - h. Surveilling a location for the purpose of executing a valid arrest or search warrant
  - i. Tracking or locating an escaped prisoner
  - j. If reasonable suspicion exists that a sUAS is necessary to prevent imminent danger to an individual or destruction of evidence
  - k. Training, maintenance, evaluation, demonstration or other similar flights as needed or requested
- 2. The sUAS may be deployed pursuant to a mutual aid request with the approval of the watch or division commander.
  - a. Any deployment pursuant to a mutual aid request will be in accordance with this policy.
- B. Restrictions
  - 1. Pursuant to Iowa Code 808.15, information obtained as a result of the use of an unmanned aerial vehicle is not admissible as evidence in a criminal or civil proceeding, unless the information is obtained pursuant to the authority of a search warrant, or unless the information is otherwise obtained in a manner that is consistent with state and federal law.
  - 2. The sUAS shall not be used to:
    - a. Conduct traffic law enforcement, pursuant to Iowa Code 321.492B
    - b. Conduct random surveillance activities
  - 3. The sUAS shall not be equipped with weapons of any kind.
- C. Complaint investigations
  - 1. Complaints of the sUAS program, such as inappropriate use or violation of a person's civil rights, will be investigated and handled in accordance with established complaint investigation procedures.

## **V. Operations**

- A. General
  - 1. The sUAS will be operated within all current regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration and Part 107 rules.
    - a. Only authorized operators who have been designated by the sUAS Program Coordinator shall be permitted to operate the sUAS.
    - b. During any operational flight, the RPIC shall possess a valid Part 107 Remote Pilot Airman Certificate or be under the direct supervision of an employee who has a valid Part 107 Certificate.
    - c. When feasible or appropriate given the circumstances of the flight mission, two employees should be used for operational flights; one RPIC and one visual observer.
      - (1) Routine or evidence gathering flights, along with training, maintenance, evaluation, demonstration or other similar flights may be conducted using one RPIC.
    - d. The sUAS shall operate within the sightline of the RPIC or visual observer unless an emergency or other reasonable situation requires the RPIC to pilot the aircraft temporarily out of sightline.
  - 2. A case investigation or supplemental report shall be completed anytime a sUAS is deployed for operational use, which shall detail at minimum, the following:
    - a. The reason for the flight
    - b. The time, date, and location of the flight
    - c. The employees directly involved with the flight (i.e. RPIC, visual observer, supervisor, etc.)
    - d. A summary of the activities covered, actions taken and outcomes from the deployment

3. All flights, regardless of their nature, require an entry into the approved flight logbook.
  4. Digital media evidence gathered during an operational flight shall be downloaded as soon as reasonably possible.
    - a. Digital media evidence will be maintained in WatchGuard with an appropriate retention period in accordance with department guidelines for digital evidence.
  5. The department may collect data using the sUAS or use sUAS-collected data only to the extent that such collection or use is consistent with and relevant to an authorized purpose.
- B. Safety considerations
1. General
    - a. The RPIC shall make every effort to ensure that flight operations will not pose any undue risk to the public, employees, or property directly or indirectly involved with the mission.
      - (1) All sUAS personnel shall receive appropriate safety training.
    - b. Prior to and during any flight, the RPIC of the aircraft shall have the final authority to launch or ground the aircraft.
    - c. Flight operations inside any controlled airspace shall only be performed under the direct approval of the FAA or through an automatic or requested waiver process.

## **VI. Maintenance and training**

- A. Maintenance
1. Each sUAS shall be inspected on a regular basis to determine if maintenance is necessary and to ensure the sUAS is up to date through the manufacturer's maintenance or similar program.
  2. The sUAS program shall have a documented maintenance program to include manufacturer's recommendations.
  3. The maintenance program shall describe who is authorized to perform maintenance on the sUAS and the required training for those personnel.
  4. Records shall be kept of all maintenance performed on the department's sUAS.
- B. Program coordinator for sUAS
1. The coordinator will be responsible for overall operations, training, certifications, maintenance and record keeping of the sUAS, such as, but not limited to the following:
    - a. Developing and maintaining operation protocols governing the deployment of sUAS
    - b. Ensuring policies and procedures follow current laws, regulations and best practices
    - c. Coordinating new applications for Part 107 Remote Pilot Airman Certificates and ensuring certificates remain current for all RPIC.
    - d. Coordinating applications for FAA waivers and ensuring any required waivers are current
    - e. Ensuring all flight crew members have completed required training relevant to their position
    - f. Developing minimum training and evaluation requirements for crew members for the purpose of maintaining skills and proficiency in operation and maintaining records of that training.
- C. Training
1. All employees authorized to act as a sUAS crew member shall receive appropriate and ongoing training as directed by the Program Coordinator.
  2. The training shall, at a minimum, meet the requirements set forth by the FAA and may be periodically adjusted to reflect operational needs, the latest safety guidelines and recommended best practices.

## **VII. Auditing and annual reporting**

- A. General

1. The sUAS Program Coordinator shall audit flight documentation periodically. This audit shall include, at minimum, a summary of the following:
  - a. Number of missions/uses
  - b. Appropriateness of uses
  - c. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the sUAS
  - d. Safety or equipment concerns
  - e. Flight time, to include a review of flight logs or data from flight time counters
2. The results of the audit shall be documented and submitted through the chain of command to the division commander for review.
3. An annual report documenting the use of the sUAS will be made available for public review.