

RENO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

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Chief of Police: Corey Solferino /s/	
General Order No: B-100-68	Effective: June 26, 2026
General Order Title: SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (sUAS) OPERATIONS	

I. Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) to support Reno Police Department operations and for the storage, retrieval, and dissemination of images and data captured by the sUAS. sUAS may be utilized to enhance the department's mission of protecting lives and property when other means and resources are not available or are less effective. Any use of a sUAS will be in strict accordance with constitutional and privacy rights and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations and Nevada Revised Statutes as may be amended.

II. Definitions

Small Unmanned Aircraft (sUA) - an unmanned aircraft weighing less than 55 pounds on takeoff, or as may be amended by the FAA, including everything that is on board or otherwise attached to the aircraft.

Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) - means a small unmanned aircraft and its associated elements (including communication links and the components that control the small unmanned aircraft) that are required for the safe and efficient operation of the small unmanned aircraft in the national airspace system.

Remote Pilot in Command (PIC) - A person who holds a remote pilot certificate with an sUAS rating and has the final authority and responsibility for the operation and safety of an sUAS operation conducted under 14 CFR Part 107.

Visual Observer (VO) - A person acting as a flight crew member who assists the sUAS PIC and the person manipulating the controls to see and avoid other air traffic or objects aloft or on the ground.

III. Privacy and Prohibitions

- A. The use of sUAS involves privacy considerations. Absent exigent circumstances, written consent, search and rescue operations, an incident involving an imminent threat to the life and safety of an individual or the public, or the Governor's declaration of an emergency, a PIC operating a sUAS on behalf of law enforcement shall not operate the sUAS for the purpose of gathering evidence or other information within the curtilage of a residence or at any other location or upon any property in this State at which a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy without a warrant. The warrant shall specify the use of sUAS and shall not be valid for more than ten (10) days, NRS 493.112.
- B. A sUAS operated by law enforcement shall not be weaponized. (NRS 493.106)
- C. Use of vision enhancement technology (e.g. thermal and other imaging equipment not generally available to the public) is permissible only where there is no protectable privacy interest or when in compliance with exigent circumstances, a search warrant, or court order. In all other instances, legal counsel should be consulted.
- D. sUAS operations shall only be conducted within FAA regulations.
- E. sUAS equipment shall not be used:
 - 1. To conduct random surveillance activities.
 - 2. To harass, intimidate or discriminate against any individual or group.
 - 3. To conduct personal business of any type.
 - 4. 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.
 - 5. To establish reasonable suspicion or probable cause using an image that was obtained in violation of NRS 493.112.

IV. Program Coordinator

- A. The Chief of Police will appoint a sUAS Operations Program Coordinator who will be responsible for the management of the sUAS program for the Reno Police Department. The sUAS Operations Program Coordinator will:
 - 1. Ensure that operational procedures related to sUAS operations by the Reno Police Department conform with current laws, regulations, and best practices.
 - 2. Obtain and keep current FAA Certificates of Waiver or Authorization as needed to support department sUAS operations.
 - 3. Ensure all PIC conducting sUAS operations for the department have completed all FAA and department approved training in the operation, applicable laws, policies, and procedures regarding the use of sUAS.
 - 4. Develop call out procedures to be utilized for the evaluation of ongoing or emerging incidents.
 - 5. Develop procedures to be followed when incorporating the non-exigent use of sUAS in criminal investigations.
 - 6. Develop operational protocols governing the deployment and operation of a sUAS including, but not limited to, safety oversight, use of visual observers, establishment of lost link procedures, and communication with air traffic control facilities.
 - 7. Develop sUAS inspection, maintenance, and record-keeping protocol to

ensure continuing airworthiness of a sUAS, up to and including its overhaul or life limits. These records will be kept using one of many available digital platforms.

8. Develop department training as necessary and recommend program enhancements.
9. Work with the City Risk Manager to ensure that the sUAS is properly insured.

V. Remote Pilot in Command

- A. All sUAS flown in support of department operations shall be conducted by a pilot that is trained and certified pursuant to 14 CFR Part 107 as well as any and all other licensure and operational requirements.
- B. A VO will be assigned by the PIC as deemed necessary by the PIC. The VO shall have completed training to serve in such a role as developed by the Program Coordinator.
- C. The PIC shall have absolute authority to evaluate and accept or decline any mission or portion thereof due to safety concerns.
- D. The PIC shall complete the adopted pre-flight checklist prior to each sUAS mission.

VI. Data and Documentation

- A. The program coordinator will develop protocols and practices 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. sUAS data and images will be stored in the department's electronic evidence repository and shall be categorized in such a manner to ensure that retention and purge periods are maintained in accordance with established records retention schedules. Additionally, all sUAS video footage shall be held in accordance with Nevada public records law.
- B. The PIC of every sUAS mission will document the details of the mission in the department's sUAS records management system.