

Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Operations

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of an unmanned aerial system (UAS).

DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

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

POLICY

Unmanned aerial systems may be utilized to enhance the department's ability to investigate crimes and major collisions as well as its mission of protecting lives and property when other means and resources are not available or are less effective. Any use of a UAS will be in strict accordance with constitutional and privacy rights.

PRIVACY

The use of the UAS potentially involves privacy considerations. Absent a warrant or exigent circumstances, operators and observers shall adhere to FAA altitude regulations and shall not intentionally record or transmit images of any location where a person would have a reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g., residence, yard, enclosure). Operators and observers shall take reasonable precautions to avoid inadvertently recording or transmitting images of areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. Reasonable precautions can include, for example, deactivating or turning imaging devices away from such areas or persons during UAS operations.

USE OF UAS

The primary purpose for the UAS would be aerial photography related to crime scenes, major traffic collisions and departmental videos (recruitment, PR, etc). The UAS could also be used for other operations such as assisting officers in finding missing children and at-risk adults, or other critical incidents presenting an immediate and serious threat to public safety and human life, such as an active shooter or hostage/barricade situation.

Any use of the UAS would require authorization from the Chief of Police or Division Commander.