



Tulsa Police Department

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Policy # 144

Policy Name Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Approved by *Wendell Franklin, Chief of Police*

Effective Date 12/02/2020

Approved Date 11/24/2020

Previous Date 06/11/2019

PURPOSE OF CHANGE:

To update policy format.

POLICY:

The Tulsa Police Department will utilize a Small Unmanned Aircraft System (SUAS) program to provide situational awareness, enhanced officer safety and improve operating efficiency. This policy sets forth how the SUAS program will operate the aircraft in coordination with law enforcement officers as guided by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). This policy is designed to minimize risk to people, property, and aircraft. Safeguarding the right to privacy of all persons is a critical part of this program.

All SUAS operations must be consistent with the U.S. Constitution and specifically used only to support official law enforcement and public safety missions. The Fourth Amendment protects individuals from unreasonable searches and seizures and generally requires law enforcement to seek a warrant in circumstances in which a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy. SUAS may only be used in connection with properly authorized investigations and activities.

The program will maintain equipment and personnel to utilize the technology as a resource to protect the lives and property of citizens. The SUAS program allows for safer, more effective and thorough search and rescue operations. It can also provide officers with the ability to analyze potential threats on active scenes and could prevent unnecessary injuries.

SUAS missions include but are not limited to situational awareness, search and rescue, tactical deployments, aerial reconstruction or incident scene documentation (crime, traffic collisions, natural, and man-made disasters), as well as any task that can best be accomplished through the air in a safe, efficient, and legal manner.

SUMMARY: Procedures for the use of small unmanned aircraft.

APPLIES TO: All sworn personnel

DEFINITIONS:

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION (COA) – certificate issued by the FAA authorizing the department's SUAS operations in the National Airspace System.

CIVIL TWILIGHT – 30 minutes before sunrise and 30 minutes after sunset.

CLASS G AIRSPACE – uncontrolled airspace. Does not require FAA authorization for operations during daylight hours.

NATIONAL AIRSPACE (NAS) – airspace owned and operated by the Federal Government, specifically the FAA.

PILOT – operator of the SUAS.

PILOT IN COMMAND (PIC) – the individual responsible for the overall flight operations of a specific mission. PIC must be certified by the FAA as a SUAS pilot.

SUAS – Small Unmanned Aircraft System, commonly referred to as “drone,” and includes communication links and the components that control the aircraft required for safe and efficient operations.

SUAS PROGRAM COORDINATOR – individual selected by the Chief of Police to oversee the operation of the SUAS program.

VISUAL LINE OF SIGHT (VLOS) – the unmanned aircraft must remain within VLOS of the pilot in command and the person manipulating the flight controls of the SUAS or VO.

VISUAL OBSERVER (VO) – the individual trained to maintain visual line-of-sight (VLOS) and 360-degree hazard awareness around the SUAS at all times and assist the PIC in carrying out all duties required for the safe operation of the SUAS.

PROCEDURES:

1. All public flights must be approved by a Captain or above, or designee, or the SUAS program Coordinator. This does not apply to training flights.
2. Each time the SUAS is flown, a pre-flight and post-flight checklist will be completed by the PIC.
3. All flights will be documented by the PIC or designee on a Small Unmanned Aerial System Deployment After action report. This report along with the checklists shall be sent to the SUAS Program Coordinator upon completion of the mission. All forms can be found on the TPD I-Net Doc Library. The SUAS Program Coordinator will audit flight documentation quarterly. The results of the audit will be documented.
4. Aircraft Specifications:
 - a. Due to the potential use of multiple platforms or aircrafts, individual aircraft specifications shall be kept with the aircraft and/or in a digital format with the PIC.
 - b. Any SUAS operated by the Tulsa Police Department must be commercially registered with the FAA and approved by the SUAS Program Coordinator.
5. Evidence Collection:
 - a. Unless required as evidence of a crime, as part of an on-going investigation, for training, or required by law, images captured by a SUAS should not be retained by the agency.
 - b. Any evidence obtained via SUAS will be collected, stored and documented in accordance with current existing Tulsa Police Department Policies and Procedures.
6. Pilots will adhere to Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations part 107 (14 CFR part 107). See TOG 1022 for Operational Limitations.
7. Pilot in Command (PIC) Certification and Responsibilities:
 - a. A person operating a SUAS must either hold a remote pilot airman certificate with a SUAS rating or be under the direct supervision of a person who holds a remote pilot certificate.
 - b. To qualify for a remote pilot certificate, a person must demonstrate aeronautical knowledge by passing an initial aeronautical knowledge test at an FAA-approved knowledge testing center. Twenty-Four months after receiving certification, pilots must pass a recurrent exam at an FAA-approved knowledge testing center.
 - c. Make available to the FAA, upon request, the SUAS for inspection or testing, and any associated documents/records required to be kept under the rule.

- d. Report to the FAA within 10 days of any operation that results in serious injury, loss of consciousness, or property damage of at least \$500.
 - e. Conduct a preflight inspection, to include specific aircraft and control station systems checks, to ensure the SUAS is in a condition for safe operation.
8. A remote pilot in command may deviate from the requirements of this rule in response to an in-flight emergency.

REGULATIONS:

- 1. The unmanned aircraft must remain within VLOS of the PIC and the person manipulating the flight controls of the SUAS or VO.
- 2. The random use of the SUAS in residential areas, solely for the purpose of gathering evidence related to criminal activity is prohibited.
- 3. Flights at night or outside class G airspace must be authorized by the FAA or the department's COA. Operations may be conducted during "civil twilight" provided the aircraft has activated anti-collision lights.
- 4. All SUAS operations shall be conducted within VLOS of the PIC or VO such that the Pilot or Observer may detect and avoid hazards such as aircraft and property.
- 5. All flights shall be conducted at less than 400 feet Above Ground Level (AGL), unless otherwise approved by the FAA.
- 6. All flights must be in compliance with Title 14 Code of federal Regulations Part 107.
- 7. Any SUAS operated by the Tulsa Police Department must be commercially registered with the FAA and approved by the SUAS Program Coordinator.
- 8. Any injuries as a result of SUAS operations must be documented in an incident report.
- 9. All SUAS operations, other than training flights, shall be deployed and used only to support official law enforcement and public safety missions.

REFERENCES:

1022, *Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems*
Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 107 (14 CFR Part 107)