



THE CITY OF SHAKER HEIGHTS
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE



GENERAL ORDER: GO4611
SUBJECT: Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS)
EFFECTIVE DATE: August 30, 2024
REVIEW: Annually
AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: N/A
CALEA: N/A

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the use of small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) to support law enforcement operation and for the storage, retrieval, and dissemination of images and data captured by the sUAS.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Shaker Heights Police Department that sUAS shall be deployed only for specific public safety missions, in accordance with constitutional and privacy rights and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, and only by trained and authorized personnel. This policy was formulated utilizing model policies from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and other available resources.

DEFINITIONS

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

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.

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

Visual Observer: If used, a sUAS flight crewmember 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.

Digital Media Evidence (DME): Digital recordings of images, sounds, and associated data.

PROCEDURES

I. Program Administration

A. Privacy

1. The use of the UAS potentially involves privacy considerations. Absent a warrant or exigent circumstances, operators and observers 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).
2. 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.

B. The sUAS shall be used only to support police operations.

1. Authorized missions may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Situational awareness;
 - b. Search and rescue;
 - c. Tactical deployment;
 - d. Incident scene documentation (crime, traffic crash, disaster); and
 - e. Community Engagement Events.

C. Prohibited Use

1. The sUAS video surveillance equipment shall not be used:
 - a. To conduct random surveillance activities.
 - b. 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.
 - c. To harass, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual or group.
 - d. To conduct personal business of any type.
2. The sUAS shall not be weaponized.
3. The sUAS shall not be operated in an unsafe manner or in violation of regulations.

D. The sUAS program shall be limited to those personnel assigned by the Chief of ~~Police~~ or designee to include a supervisor(s), RPIC(s), visual observers, and others deemed necessary to ensure safe and efficient operations.

E. Only authorized RPIC's who have completed the required training shall be permitted to operate the sUAS.

- F. To enhance the level of safety and promote appropriate use of sUAS, all procedures contained herein, shall be followed without deviation, unless necessary during an emergency, or with appropriate supervisory approval.
- G. Use of vision enhancement technology (e.g., thermal and other imaging equipment not generally available to the public) is permissible in viewing areas only where there is no protectable privacy interest, when there are exigent circumstances, or when in compliance with a search warrant or court order. In all other instances, legal counsel should be consulted.
- H. Complaint Investigations
 - 1. Should there be a complaint alleging inappropriate use of the sUAS, the complaint shall be handled in accordance with agency protocols for internal investigations.
 - 2. Any complaint alleging a violation of a person's civil rights by use of the sUAS shall be documented and be investigated through this agency's policy regarding investigation of complaints.
 - 3. Unauthorized or inappropriate use of a sUAS shall result in strict accountability, in accordance with established disciplinary procedures.
- I. Auditing and Annual Reporting
 - 1. A supervisor shall audit flight documentation monthly. 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 concerns;
 - e. Equipment concerns; and
 - f. 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 to the Chief of Police or designee.
 - 3. The Shaker Heights Police Department shall publish an annual report documenting the agency's use of sUAS.
 - a. This report shall be made public and shared with the community.

II. Personnel Qualifications and Training

- A. All sUAS program personnel shall receive training necessary to safely, efficiently, and effectively manage or operate sUAS, to include initial and recurrent training.
- B. All RPICs shall hold the appropriate credentials.
- C. All sUAS program personnel shall receive training in the legal aspects of sUAS use.

- D. All sUAS program personnel shall receive annual training on the policies and procedures governing the use of the equipment.

III. Operational Procedures

- A. All sUAS operations shall comply with the guidelines from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
- B. All sUAS missions shall be approved by a supervisor. Supervisory personnel shall manage all deployments and uses of sUAS to ensure that officers equipped with sUAS devices utilize them in accordance with the policy and procedures defined herein.
- C. All flights shall be documented and all flight time shall be accurately recorded. In addition, each documented deployment of the sUAS shall include information regarding:
 - 1. The reason for the flight;
 - 2. The time, date, and location of the flight;
 - 3. The names of the supervisor approving the deployment and the staff assigned; and
 - 4. A summary of the activities covered, actions taken, and outcomes from the deployment.
- D. Except for those instances where officer safety or investigation could be jeopardized, and where reasonably possible and practical, the Shaker Heights Police Department shall notify the public in the area of the flight.
- E. Where there are specific and articulable grounds to believe that the sUAS shall collect evidence of criminal wrongdoing and the sUAS shall be used in a manner that may intrude upon reasonable expectations of privacy, a search warrant shall be obtained prior to conducting the flight.
- F. Responding to mutual aid requests for the sUAS shall be in accordance with G.O.0203 Mutual Aid.
- G. Data collected using a sUAS shall be used only to the extent that such collection or use is consistent with and relevant to an authorized purpose.
- H. DME Retention and Management
 - 1. All DME captured, recorded, or otherwise produced by the equipment is the sole property of the Shaker Heights Police Department.
 - 2. All DME shall be retained as provided in the established records retention schedule.
 - 3. All DME shall be securely downloaded at the completion of each mission. The sUAS RPIC shall record information for each file that shall include the date, time, location, and case reference numbers or other mission identifiers and those personnel involved in mission.
 - 4. Agency personnel shall not edit, alter, erase, duplicate, copy, share, or

otherwise distribute DME in any manner without prior authorization from the Chief of Police or designee.

5. All access to sUAS DME shall be specifically authorized, and all access is to be audited to ensure that only authorized users are accessing the data and only for legitimate and authorized purposes.
6. Files should be securely stored in accordance with agency policy and appropriate records retention laws and retained no longer than necessary for purposes of training or for use in an investigation or prosecution.

IV. Safety

- A. The sUAS program shall have a safety program based on the principles of an aviation safety management system.
- B. All sUAS personnel shall receive appropriate safety training.

V. Maintenance

- A. Each sUAS shall be inspected on a regular basis to determine if maintenance is necessary.
- B. The sUAS program shall have a documented maintenance program to include manufacturer's recommendations.
- C. The maintenance program shall describe who is authorized to perform maintenance on the sUAS and the required training for those personnel.
- D. Records shall be kept of all maintenance performed on agency sUAS.

Approved by the order of

(Signature on file in the Office of Chief of Police)

Wayne D. Hudson
Chief of Police