



2-15 SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (sUAS) OPERATIONS

Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

None

B. Form(s)

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Certificate of Authorization (COA)
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Notice to Airman (NOTAM)
~~sUAS Annual Report~~
sUAS Maintenance Log
UAS Mission Checklist

C. Other Resource(s)

14 C.F.R. Part 107 Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Pilot Training Standards (PTS)
NMSA 1978, § 30-20-3 Making or Permitting False Public Voucher
ROA 1994, § 2-9-1-4 Civil Emergencies
sUAS Annual Report

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

None

2-15-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the ~~guidelines~~ requirements for the operation, maintenance, and handling of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) by Albuquerque Police Department (Department) personnel.

2-15-2 Policy

It is the policy of the ~~Albuquerque Police Department~~ (Department) to use sUAS to enhance public safety in a manner that takes into consideration the privacy rights of individuals as established by the United States and State of New Mexico Constitutions, including the Fourth Amendment, and applicable federal, state, federal, and local laws. ~~Department personnel shall obtain a warrant anytime the use of a sUAS may intrude upon an individual's reasonable expectation of privacy and Constitutional rights~~ it is necessary to do so.



~~It is also the policy of the Department to Any sUAS shall only be operated~~ any sUAS only under the circumstances set forth in this ~~policy~~ Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and only with the approval of an Electronic Support Unit (ESU) supervisor. ~~Furthermore, the~~ sUAS shall only be operated by trained and qualified Department personnel, and ~~in accordance~~ consistent with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

N/A 2-15-3 Definitions

~~1.A.~~ Aircraft Operator (AO)

The trained Department personnel who physically operate the sUAS flight controls of ~~a the~~ sUAS. ~~The AO operates the flight controls under the direct supervision of the~~ Remote Pilot-in-Command (RPIC)/Drone Operator and shall have completed the required training for the involved sUAS flight system.

B. Drone Program Coordinator (DPC)

A designated member of the Electronic Support Unit (ESU who is) responsible for monitoring Department drone activity and certifications. The DPC is also responsible for managing the Department's training program for sUAS operations.

~~1.C.~~ Remote Pilot-In-Command (RPIC)/Drone Operator

~~The trained~~ sworn officer who is personnel ultimately responsible for the operation of the sUAS and the public's safety during all stages of flight operations whether physically piloting the sUAS or overseeing another Aircraft Operator.

~~To be qualified as an RPIC, an aircraft operator shall one must be trained on the involved aircraft and possess a current FAA license that is consistent with FAA regulations under (14 CFR Part 107) for a remote pilot with a sUAS rating as well as be certified by the ESU as a Drone Operator by the ESU.~~

~~2.D.~~ Sensor Operator (SO)

~~The trained~~ sworn officer department personnel with the sole responsibility of attaching and operating any designated apparatuses to be used on ~~the~~ sUAS during a flight; apparatuses can include cameras, FLIR devices, and thermal devices.

~~3.E.~~ Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS)

An unmanned aircraft of any type that is capable of sustaining flight, whether remotely controlled or pre-programmed, with a weight of less than fifty-five (55) lbs. The sUAS's are designed for gathering information through photographs or video recordings.

~~4.F.~~ Visual Observer (VO)



~~An individual~~ A Department employee who is continuously responsible for notifying the RPIC/Drone Operator of any ground based or airborne hazards to the flight. ~~Department personnel~~ The VO must shall be trained on their VO d duties and responsibilities prior to acting in this role.

2-15-4 Procedures

~~4~~ A. General

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1. sUAS shall only be deployed by trained and authorized sworn Department personnel.

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2. sUAS shall only be deployed with the approval of a supervisor in the operator's chain of command.

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~~2~~ B. Use and Assignment

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1. The RPIC/Drone Operator shall assume sole responsibility for the maintenance and safekeeping of the sUAS once it has been assigned ~~for use in a mission to a specific division/section.~~

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2. The deployment of an sUAS shall be directly supervised by a trained and FAA licensed RPIC/Drone Operator who has successfully completed all Department training and FAA ~~requirements~~ regulations.

3. The Department shall cooperate with all federal, state, and local authorities in response to emergency deployments and mishap investigations.

4. ESU personnel shall maintain sUAS assignments to divisions/sections in order to adequately document missions, consistent with FAA regulations.

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5. Department personnel shall not operate sUAS in a manner that presents an undue risk to a person or property on the ground or in the air.

6. Department personnel shall not share footage obtained from the sUAS with any federal immigration agency unless ordered by a judge.

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~~3~~ C. The use of the sUAS shall be ~~in accordance~~ consistent with FAA ~~requirements~~ regulations. Authorized uses of Department sUAS shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Any use authorized by a warrant;

2. Crime scene documentation and evidence collection;



3. Circumstances where:

- ~~4~~a. Probable cause to believe evidence of a crime will be found in a particularized location; and
- ~~2~~b. Exigent circumstances exist to conduct an aerial search in the location.

~~4~~4. Hot pursuits;

~~2~~5. Circumstances where the sUAS shall be used to observe people and items in plain view from ground level or public navigable airspace in a non-intrusive manner;

~~3~~6. Open field;

~~4~~7. Areas open to the public;

~~5~~8. To eConducting community caretaker and emergency assistance functions; ~~and~~

9. Assistance in inspections of critical infrastructure;

10. Service calls where the a sUAS can aid by providing an additional measure of officer safety;

11. Search and rescue in an allowable airspace; and

12. Tactical operations.

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~~4~~D. Consistent with FAA regulations, uUnauthorized uses of DDepartment sUAS shall include, but areis not limited to:

- 1. ~~To t~~Targeting a person based solely on individual characteristics such as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation;
- 2. ~~To h~~Harassmenting, intimidationing, or discriminationing against any individual or group;
- 3. Photographing or videoing lawful protests, demonstrations, rallies, marches, or other expressions of free speech, unless:
 - ~~4~~a. The event is in a public area and in plain view, in which case the sUAS may be used from a navigable public airspace to ensure the safety of the public and the individuals participating in the event by aiding in ~~the~~ controlling the direction of traffic around such assemblies;
 - ~~2~~b. The gathering has been provided at least one dispersal order which has been publicly given to the persons involved; or



~~3.c.~~ Any situation ~~which that~~ meets the state statute or City of Albuquerque ordinance definitions of a riot or unlawful assembly occurring beyond the permissive scope of established state and local laws. ~~(NMSA 1978 § 30-20-3; Revised Ordinances of Albuquerque, New Mexico 1994 § 2-9-1-1).~~

4. ~~To e~~ Conducting any type of personal surveillance of another individual which is unrelated to a legitimate law enforcement purpose; and.

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5. Use of the sUAS as a weapon ~~shall not be weaponized.~~

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~~2.E.~~ RPIC/Drone Operator Expectations and Procedures

~~When operating the an sUAS, t~~ The RPIC/Drone Operator shall: ~~adhere to the following standards when operating a sUAS.~~

~~1.~~
~~1.~~ Safety

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~~1.~~ All sUAS shall not be operated in a manner that presents an undue risk to a person or property on the ground or in the air.

~~2.a.~~ Only All sUAS shall be piloted by personnel who operate sUAS in which they are ~~are~~ properly trained and competent to use to operate the sUAS;

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~~3.b.~~ Conduct a ~~All sUAS flights shall be conducted~~ only after a thorough assessment of the risks associated with an activity and complete the UAS Mission Checklist. ~~The risk assessment shall include, but is shall not be limited to consideration of the following factors:~~

~~4.i.~~ Weather conditions relative to the performance capability of the sUAS;

~~2.ii.~~ Identification of normally anticipated failure modes (e.g., lost link, power failures, loss of control, etc.) and the consequences of such failures;

~~3.iii.~~ The RPIC shall be responsible for all Verification that crewmembers are ~~being~~ in compliance with FAA safety regulations;

~~4.iv.~~ Compliance with overlying airspace and other aviation regulations, as appropriate for a particular mission; and

~~5.v.~~ The creation of contingency plans for all anticipated off-nominal events to be shared openly with all appropriate authorities.

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~~2.~~ Professionalism

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~~c. a.~~ RPICs shall f ~~ollow~~ all federal, state, and local laws as they relate to the operation of sUAS;

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~~a. b.~~ RPIC shall only operate sUAS model types which they have been trained to operate ~~Privacy~~

~~b.d.~~ The RPIC shall a ~~dhere~~ to United States and State of New Mexico Constitutions, and both federal, and laws, state, and local laws and the Constitution ~~as they address an individual's right to privacy and the use of sUAS by law enforcement personnel~~;



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~~The Department shall not share footage obtained from a sUAS with any federal immigration agency unless ordered by a judge.~~

~~1. Position Responsibilities and Duties~~

~~1. Remote Pilot In Command~~

~~1.e. The RPIC is Be authorized to refuse any flight request based on current meteorological conditions, physiological conditions of the crew, or for any other reason that the RPIC/Drone Operator believes shall affect the safety of the flight. The RPIC/Drone Operator shall inform the Electronic Support Unit (ESU) Sergeant =s= Should the RPIC they refuse a flight for any reason, they shall inform the Electronic Support Unit (ESU) Sergeant.~~

~~2.f. Prior to flight and while the sUAS is in flight, the RPIC is authorized and responsible for making all decisions regarding use of sUAS, including, but not limited to the following:~~

- ~~1.i. Direction of the sUAS;~~
- ~~2.ii. Duration of flight time;~~
- ~~3.iii. Capabilities of the sUAS;~~
- ~~iv. Maximum load allowance;~~
- ~~v. Use of fixed certified equipment;~~
- ~~vi. Affixing of any additional equipment; and~~
- ~~4.vii. Determination of allowance for personal or agency equipment as well as configurations.~~

~~1.g. The RPIC shall Be responsible for all Department orders and procedures governing the use of sUAS, as well as FAA regulations, and other regulatory data FAA Certificate of Authorization (COA) requirements that impact the bearing on the performance of their duties.~~

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~~2.h. The RPIC shall ensure that there is only one (1) RPIC at any given time. The RPIC shall Exercise final responsibility and authority for the safety of the sUAS, Department personnel, and equipment during flight operations.~~

~~3.i. The RPIC shall will Be responsible for the safe operation of all flights, including, but not limited to:~~

- ~~1.i. Flight planning and preparation, including a pre-flight inspection of the sUAS and equipment;~~
- ~~2.ii. Weather briefing, to include minimum visibility allowable (three (3) statute miles), wind gust spread speeds greater than the sUAS is allowed, and sustained or peak wind;~~
- ~~3.iii. Flight operations including, course, air speed, altitude, and duration;~~
- ~~4.iv. Landing zone selection;~~
- ~~5.v. Go/no-go and landing judgments with regard to weather minimums or other criteria;~~
- ~~6.vi. All very high frequency (VHF) air-to-air, air-to-ground, and air traffic control communications, and any other radio communications;~~
- ~~7.vii. Timely reporting of new or previously unknown hazards, which pose a safety to flight;~~



- ~~8.~~viii. Post-flight inspection, to include ensuring the batteries are recharged and the duty sUAS is ready for the next mission;
- ~~9.~~ix. Making appropriate entries in the aircraft logbooks; and
- ~~10.~~x. Maintaining a current remote pilot certificate RPIC licensure, consistent with FAA regulations as required pursuant to 14 CFR Part 107.

~~4.~~F. Flight Operations

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1. ~~The Remote Pilot In Command~~ RPIC/Drone Operator shall:

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~~a. Consistent with the COA, The RPIC shall ensure an FAA Notice to Airman (NOTAM) is released for flights involving the sUAS in controlled airspace as required by FAA regulations.~~ due to the immediacy of some emergency management operations, issue the FAA Notice to Airman (NOTAM) notification requirement as soon as practical before flight;

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~~4.~~i. If the issuance of an FAA NOTAM may endanger the safety of persons on the ground, it may be excluded. If the NOTAM is not issued, the proponent must be prepared to provide justification to the FAA upon request.

~~2.~~b. If a search warrant is required to deploy the sUAS in a mission, ensure the case detective-agent shall be responsible for writing and having completed the search warrant and has verified the search warrant was signed by a judge prior to takeoff.

~~3.~~c. ~~The RPIC shall will e~~ Ensure direct participants in sUAS operations are briefed on mission parameters and current operations.

~~d. The RPIC shall will a~~ Adhere to FAA regulations and permissions.

~~e. During any phase of flight, if the VO notices a malfunction with the sUAS, the RPIC/Drone Operator shall~~ immediately terminate the flight;

~~f. Before any flight, be responsible for pre-flight inspections according to the UAS Mission Checklist;~~

~~g. When determining that a deficiency in the mechanics or electronics of an sUAS exists, ensure that the appropriate repairs are conducted before flight; and~~

~~h. After every flight, conduct a post-flight inspection according to the UAS Mission Checklist; and~~

~~i. Log all sUAS operations on the UAS Mission Checklist and submit the checklist to the Drone Program Coordinator~~ DPC within twenty-four (24) hours.

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2. ~~The Visual Observer (VO) shall:~~

~~a. The VO will shall a~~ Assist the RPIC/Drone Operator when needed and shall will have the following responsibilities;

~~4.~~b. ~~Shall b~~ Be responsible for see-and-avoid operations of the sUAS;

~~2.~~c. ~~Shall r~~ Remain in radio contact with the RPIC/Drone Operator and communicate any obstacles the sUAS may encounter during the mission;



- ~~3.d.~~ Shall immediately notify the RPIC/Drone Operator when the flight becomes a hazard to ground personnel or other aircraft;
- ~~4.~~ During any phase of flight, if the VO notices a malfunction with the sUAS, the RPIC shall immediately terminate the flight;
- ~~5.e.~~ Shall ~~Will~~ Be responsible for all radio communications with air traffic control and dispatch; and
- ~~6.f.~~ Shall ~~Will~~ Operate additional ground equipment in order to allow the pilot an ability to maintain complete focus on the operation of the sUAS.

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~~1.~~ sUAS Inspection Requirements

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- ~~1.~~ Before any flight, the RPIC shall be responsible for pre flight inspections according to the pre flight checklist.
- ~~2.~~ Where the RPIC finds a deficiency in the mechanics or electronics of an sUAS they shall ensure that the appropriate repairs are conducted before flight.
- ~~3.~~ After every flight, a post flight inspection shall be conducted by the RPIC, according to the post flight checklist.
- ~~4.3.~~ The ESU Sergeant/Drone Program Coordinator/DPC shall be responsible assuring that all checklists are up-to-date and current for each sUAS make and model.

~~2.4.~~ Emergency Procedures:

- ~~4.a.~~ All Department personnel involved in sUAS operations ~~All flight personnel shall be familiar all emergency procedures and their specific duty assignments.~~
- ~~2.b.~~ In the event of an emergency, involving a threat to the safety of persons or property, the RPIC/Drone Operator may deviate from any directive relating to aircraft, equipment, and weather minimums to the extent required to meet the emergency. ~~and~~
- ~~3.c.~~ In the event of an emergency, which requires reporting to the FAA, the RPIC/Drone Operator shall assure that all required information is forwarded to the Albuquerque Flight Standards District Office, consistent with FAA regulations on reporting requirements to the Albuquerque Flight Standards District Office.

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~~4.G.~~ Training and Standardization Requirements

- 1. To be qualified as an RPIC/Drone Operator, an AO shall be trained on the involved aircraft and possess a current FAA license that is consistent with FAA regulations (14 C.F.R. Part 107) for a remote pilot with the a sUAS rating as well as be certified by the ESU as a Drone Operator.
- 2. The Drone Program Coordinator/DPC shall evaluate p Proficiency and annual check performances will be evaluated in accordance consistent with the maneuvers and procedures listed in the FAA Pilot Training Standards (PTS) for ~~rote wing/fixed wing and for a specific aircraft~~ sUAS operations.



a. Recurrence training is not limited to actual RPIC/Drone Operator or VO skills but includes knowledge of all pertinent sUAS/Aviation matters.

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~~2. If required, an FAA designated flight examiner will conduct a proficiency flight as often as the FAA deems necessary for safe flights of the sUAS.~~

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~~3. VO shall complete training in the recognition of ground and airborne hazards and communication parameters with crew to remain clear of any conflicting hazards. VO training will also include instruction on the rules and responsibilities described in 14 CFR Part 91; instruction on air traffic and radio communications, including the use of approved ATC/Pilot phraseology; and instruction on the appropriate sections of the Aeronautical Information Manual.~~

3. All officers sworn assigned to the ESU personnel must shall maintain proficiency in their RPIC/Drone Operator or #VO abilities. Officers Sworn ESU personnel who do not have any documented training flight time within a span of ninety (90) days shall demonstrate proficiency by to an authorized Department member the Drone Program Coordinator DPC before being allowed to be involved in a mission as an RPIC/VO.

4. All sworn personnel who wish to operate on the sUAS shall be certified as a Drone Operator by sworn ESU personnel.

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~~5.1. Recurrence training is not limited to actual RPIC/VO skills but includes knowledge of all pertinent sUAS/Aviation matters.~~

~~H.~~ Maintenance

1. The RPIC/Drone Operator shall:

a. Complete a maintenance log for e~~Each sUAS shall have its own maintenance log. All maintenance shall conform to and follow manufacturer guidelines and schedules. This~~The maintenance log shall include:

i. D~~documentation concerning routine check-ups;~~

ii. R,~~replacing of parts;~~

iii. B~~battery checks;~~ and

~~iv. D diagnostic checks. All maintenance shall conform to and follow manufacturer guidelines and schedules.~~

~~b.~~ Only use approved sUAS parts shall be used during maintenance requiring the replacement of existing components.

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~~3.2. When sending sUAS out for repairs, the Drone Program Coordinator DPC shall~~If the sUAS is sent out for repairs repairs, then log the external maintenance time



frame shall be logged along with any repairs needed to make the device operational.

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~~4~~I. Retention of sUAS Data

1. The RPIC/Drone Operator shall:

~~a. Provide to the case agent all~~ Any footage collected by sUAS during a mission that contains evidence shall be turned over to the case agent for use in any subsequent prosecution; ~~and~~

~~4~~b. Delete ~~a~~ Any surveillance footage collected by sUAS during a mission that does not contain evidence shall be deleted within two (2) weeks of the recording, consistent with the Electronic Communications Privacy Act.

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~~4~~J. Authority

1. All Department personnel involved in the sUAS program shall strictly adhere to ~~These the directives in this Standard Operating Procedure SOP are to be strictly adhered to by any person involved in the sUAS program.~~

~~4~~a. Only ~~t~~The Chief of Police shall have the sole authority to deviate from these directives, when such variance is in accordance consistent with federal, state, and local laws.

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~~4~~K. Reporting on the Use of sUAS

1. The Drone Program Coordinator/DPC shall:

a. Track and monitor all drone flights and associated statistics;

b. Be responsible for completing the sUAS Annual Report; and

c. Submit the sUAS Annual Report to the Chief of Police on an annual basis. The sUAS Annual Report shall include information concerning:

~~i. Annually the Department will~~ shall submit a report to the Chief of Police with ~~information concerning (a) the number of times an sUAS were~~ as used;

~~ii. (b) the~~ t Type of incidents during in which the sUAS were ~~utilized~~ used; and

~~4~~iii. (c) the r Results of using the sUAS during an incident, including, but not limited to, any operation, service call, or investigation in which an ~~the~~ sUAS was utilized.