
Crookston Police Department

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Unmanned Aerial System (UAS)	POLICY # 169
AUTHORIZED BY: Darin Selzler, Chief of Police	ISSUE DATE April 22 nd , 2025
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REFERENCE(S): 14 C.F.R. § 107 MN Ch. 360 MN Statute § 13.82 MN Statute § 626.19	MODIFICATION DATE

I. POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the Crookston Police Department (CPD) for the use of an unmanned aerial system (UAS). A UAS may be utilized to enhance the CPD's 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 a manner consistent with local, state and federal laws and regulations, applicable case law, departmental policies, privacy rights, and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

II. DEFINITIONS

Unmanned Aerial System (UAS): An unmanned aircraft of any type that is capable of sustaining directed flight, whether preprogrammed or remotely controlled without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the UAS, and all of the supporting or attached systems designed for gathering information through imaging, recording, or any other means.

Visual Observer (VO): A person who assists the pilot to see and avoid other air traffic or objects aloft or on the ground.

UAS Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC): A person who is directly responsible for and is the final authority of the UAS. The pilot must ensure that the UAS operation complies with all applicable regulations.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA): Rules prescribed by the Federal Aviation Administration governing all aviation activities in the United States. The use of UAS falls under Chapter 14 § 107.

Program Coordinator: A Crookston Police Department staff member appointed by Chief of Police to be responsible for the management of the UAS program and to ensure that all applicable policies, local, state, federal, and FAA laws and regulations are followed.

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III. PRIVACY

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. Operators and VO shall take reasonable precautions to avoid inadvertently recording or transmitting images of areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

IV. PROGRAM CORRINATOR

The Chief of Police and/or their designee will appoint a program coordinator who will be responsible for the management of the UAS program. The program coordinator will ensure that policies and procedures conform to current laws, regulations, and best practices and will have the following additional responsibilities:

- Coordinating the FAA Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) application process and ensuring that the COA is current, and/or coordinating compliance with FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate, as appropriate for department operations.
- Ensuring that all authorized operators and required observers have completed all required FAA and department-approved training in the operation, applicable laws, policies, and procedures regarding use of the UAS.
- Coordinating the completion of the FAA Emergency Operation Request Form in emergency situations, as applicable (e.g., natural disasters, search and rescue, emergency situations to safeguard human life).
- Developing protocols for conducting criminal investigations involving a UAS, including documentation of time spent monitoring a subject.
- Implementing a system for public notification of UAS deployment.
- Developing operational protocols governing the deployment and operation of a UAS including but not limited to safety oversight, use of visual observers, establishment of lost link procedures, and secure communication with air traffic control facilities.
- Developing a protocol for fully documenting all missions.
- Developing a UAS inspection, maintenance, and record-keeping protocol to ensure continuing airworthiness of a UAS, up to and including its overhaul or life limits.

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- Developing protocols 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.
- Developing protocols that ensure retention and purge periods are maintained in accordance with established records retention schedules.
- Facilitating law enforcement access to images and data captured by the UAS.
- Recommending program enhancements, particularly regarding safety and information security.
- Ensuring that established protocols are followed by monitoring and providing periodic reports on the program to the Chief of Police and/or their designee.
- Maintaining familiarity with FAA regulatory standards, state laws and regulations, and local ordinances regarding the operations of a UAS.
- Developing protocols for reviewing and approving requests for use of the Crookston Police Department UAS by government entities.
- Preparing and submitting the required annual report to the Commissioner of Public Safety.
- Posting the Department policies and procedures regarding the use of UAV on the department website, as applicable.
- Reviewing the program and UAS use for compliance with Minn. Stat. § 626.19.

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V. USE OF UAS

Only authorized operators who have completed the required training shall be permitted to operate the UAS.

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 or when in compliance with a search warrant or court order. In all other instances, legal counsel should be consulted.

UAS operations should only be conducted consistent with FAA regulations.

Members shall not use a UAS without a search warrant, except:

- During or in the aftermath of an emergency situation or disaster that involves the risk of death or bodily harm to a person.
- Over a public event where there is a heightened risk to the safety of participants or bystanders.
- To counter the risk of a terrorist attack by a specific individual or organization if the agency determines that credible intelligence indicates a risk.
- To prevent the loss of life or property in natural or man-made disasters and to facilitate operation planning, rescue, and recovery operations.
- To conduct a threat assessment in anticipation of a specific event.
- To collect information from a public area if there is reasonable suspicion of criminal activity.
- To collect information for crash reconstruction purposes after a serious or deadly collision occurring on a public road.
- Over a public area for officer training or public relations purposes.
- For purposes unrelated to law enforcement at the request of a government entity, provided the request is in writing and specifies the reason for the request and a proposed period of use.

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VI. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

Each use of a UAS should be properly documented by providing the following:

- A unique case or calls for service number.
- A factual basis for the use of a UAS.
- The applicable exception, unless a warrant was obtained.

VII. PROHIBITED USE

The UAS video surveillance equipment shall not be used:

- To conduct random surveillance activities.
- 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.
- To harass, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual or group.
- To conduct personal business of any type.
- The UAS shall not be weaponized.

VIII. ADDITIONAL PROHIBITIONS

Unless authorized by a warrant, a UAS shall not be deployed with facial recognition or biometric matching technology.

Unless authorized by a warrant or for purposes of a permitted use outlined in this policy, a UAS shall not be used to collect data on public protests or demonstrations.

IX. RETENTION OF UAS DATA

The Program Coordinator shall ensure that data collected by the UAS is disclosed or deleted as required by Minn. Stat. § 626.19, including the deletion of collected data as soon as possible, and in no event later than seven days after collection, unless the data is part of an active criminal investigation.

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X. TRAINING

The Crookston Police Department recognizes frequent training is critical for maintaining the proficiency of UAS pilots. All CPD pilots will receive basic certification training as determined by the Program Coordinator prior to assuming duties. CPD pilots will conduct a reasonable amount of in-service training, as determined by the Program Coordinator by approval of the Chief of Police and/or their designee.