

City of Chicago Heights Police Department

General Order 48.0.0

Effective Date: 15 Jan 2025	Standard Operating Procedure Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS)	Revised Date 11 Dec 2024
Chief of Police	References FAA Order 8900.1 Volume 16 UAS 725 ILCS 5/108-3 Grounds for a Search Warrant 725 ILCS 167 Freedom from Drone Surveillance Act 14 CFR 107 Drone Operation & Certification Regulations 14 CFR 61 14 CFR 91 50 ILCS 205 1/9 State of Illinois Local Records Act	

48.1.0 PURPOSE

This policy establishes the authorized use and operational guidelines for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). The UAS program is a function of the Chicago Heights Police Department's Community Response Team.

48.2.0 POLICY

It is the policy of the Chicago Heights Police Department to embrace new technologies that advance the capabilities of the office to protect and serve the public. This policy is designed to minimize risk to the public, property, and Chicago Heights Police Department's personnel during the operation of UAS while continuing to safeguard the right of privacy of the public.

48.3.0 APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all sworn and non-sworn Chicago Heights Police Department personnel.

48.4.0 DEFINITIONS

A. Certificate of Authorization (COA) – COA is an authorization issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to a public operator for a specific UAS.

B. Defined Incident Perimeter – A defined perimeter to be determined based on the scope of the operation and a defined operational ceiling at or below four hundred (400) feet Above Ground Level (AGL).

C. Night Flight – Flight of a UAS that occurs between one half (1/2) hour after sunset and one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise. The time of sunset and sunrise are determined by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

D. Pilot in Command (PIC) – The individual responsible for the overall flight operations for a specific mission. The PIC has the final responsibility for all aspects of the mission to include safety.

E. UAS Team Lead (UTL)– the UTL is a sworn member of the Police Department assigned by the Chief of Police or his/her designee. The UTL is responsible for the administrative functions related to the UAS program, including maintaining a current list of all UAS team members. The UTL is also responsible for the condition, maintenance, and flight records of the UAS and associated equipment.

F. small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) – An aircraft without a human pilot on board, weighing less than 55 pounds on takeoff. Its flight is controlled either autonomously by computers on board the vehicle or under the remote control of a pilot.

G. Visual Observer – A person who is designated by the PIC to assist the remote PIC and the person manipulating the flight controls of the UAS to supplement situational awareness and Visual Line of Sight (VLOS), assisting with seeing and avoiding other air traffic or objects aloft or on the ground.

H. (NOTAM) Notice to Airmen - A notice filed with an aviation authority to alert aircraft pilots of potential hazards along a flight route or at a location that could affect the safety of the flight

48.5.0 ORGANIZATION

1. The UAS Team Lead will report to the Community Response Team Lieutenant Commander or other personnel designated by the Chief of Police and be responsible for all UAS operations, maintenance, coordination, purchasing, standardization, evaluations, training, safety, planning, and personnel matters involving UAS aircraft and assigned or attached UAS Team personnel. Listed below are additional responsibilities of the UAS Team Lead;

- A. Coordinate the FAA Certification of Authorization (COA) and/or the 14 CFR 107 application process; ensure all certifications of pilots are current.
- B. Ensuring all authorized operators have completed all training required by statute or by general order
- C. Informing the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority of the number of drones owned and operated by the Chicago Heights Police Department by April 1st annually (725 ILCS 167/35). This may be accomplished through online submission to the ICJIA
- D. Make notification, when applicable, to the public of the operation of the Department's sUAS either by way of a Press Release, or social media through our Department's Public Information Officer.
- E. Keep log of all deployments
- F. Conduct and annual audit of the program including, but not limited to;
 - a. Analyzing and reviewing flight information;
 - b. Outlining the number of deployments in the field;
 - c. Locations of deployments;
 - d. Applicable case reports;
 - e. Any unusual circumstance surrounding sUAS deployment and use;
 - f. Any and all training Deployments
- G. Recommend Program enhancements, especially regarding safety and information security
- H. Reviewing Department policy and Procedures and recommending any necessary changes.

2. All UAS team members will work under the direct supervision of the UAS Team Lead when activated.

3. The UAS Team Lead will be responsible for making sure that the UAS Team is readily available for use as designated by the Community Response Team Lieutenant Commander or other personnel designated by the Chief of Police.

48.6.0 TRAINING

1. Prior to authorization to operate a UAS, assigned personnel must complete mandatory training provided by the department to obtain an understanding on how to use the UAS and the procedures outlined in this policy. Pursuant to [14 CFR 107.74](#), the initial training course should cover, but not be limited to, the following areas of knowledge:

- A. Applicable regulations relating to small unmanned aircraft system rating privileges, limitations, and flight operation;
- B. Effects of weather on small unmanned aircraft performance;
- C. Small unmanned aircraft loading;
- D. Emergency Procedures;
- E. Crew Resource management;
- F. Determining the performance of small unmanned aircraft; and
- G. Maintenance and preflight inspection procedures.

2. Annually, authorized officers shall undergo refresher training on the equipment to ensure continued effective use, operation of the equipment and to incorporate changes, updates or other revisions to the FAA and/or [14 CFR 107](#) requirements, statutes or Department policy. The recurrent training course should cover, but not be limited to, the following areas of knowledge:

- A. Applicable regulations relating to small unmanned aircraft system rating privileges, limitations, and flight operation;
- B. Emergency procedures;
- C. Crew resource management;
- D. Maintenance and preflight inspection procedures;
- E. All sUAS pilots will be familiar and proficient with the role and functions of an observer
- F. All pilots will demonstrate and ability to obtain and interpret weather information
- G. All pilots will demonstrate a working knowledge of the airspace intended for operations
- H. All training shall be documented

3. Proficiency Training – In order to maintain proficiency, all pilots shall conduct at least (4) four (30) minute flights each month to include safe take-off and landings. All flights, include training and after maintenance flights, shall be documented on a UAS flight report and digitally stored in the appropriate database. Pilot proficiency training is not limited to actual pilot skills, but also knowledge of all pertinent sUAS related matters and understanding of current COA and/or FAA Part 107 guidelines. Members who do not have documented training or flight time for the preceding sixty (60) days shall demonstrate proficiency before performing pilot duties during an operational deployment.

Additional in-service aircraft specific training shall include a minimum of one (8) hour block of ground instruction and flight time, including making (4) four (30) thirty minute flights to demonstrate proficiency. Failure to maintain and prove proficiency shall result in removal from UAS team.

4. Pilot Mission Eligibility – All members assigned to UAS Team shall have, at a minimum, completed FAA Part 107 remote pilot certificate, and have conducted four (4) documented flights, and have a minimum of two (2) flight hours using the same aircraft type. All pilots must be able to show proficiency in specific core competencies in all UAS controls and operating systems in accordance with FAA and/or COA regulations before being approved to fly missions.

5. sUAS Observer - In the event an observer is required, the PIC on-scene will assign an observer from available on-scene personnel. All training and mission details will be provided to the selected observer at the time of the mission.

6. Additional training may be provided at periodic intervals for personnel displaying a substandard performance in the use of UAS equipment, or as determined by the UAS Team Lead.

7. sUAS Pilot Termination - removal or suspension from UAS operations will be the decision of the Chief of Police or his/her designee with recommendations from the UAS Team Lead and the

Community Response Team Lieutenant Commander. Reasons for removal or suspension from the team include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Failure to attend special assignments,
- B. Failure to attend training unless excused,
- C. Failure to pass a certification or re-certification course,
- D. Failure to maintain an FAA Part 107 certification,
- E. Failure to maintain teams standards, and;
- F. Failure to meet office/team duties and responsibilities.

48.7.0 INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE

1. All authorized Department UAS devices, and related equipment, shall be maintained in a state of operational readiness, or shall be considered out of service until repaired or replaced.
2. Modifications outside the manufacturer's specifications shall not be made to any UAS.
3. No additional equipment shall be fitted to a UAS without written approval from the Chief of Police, or his/her designee.
4. Assigned officers shall use reasonable care to ensure the proper functioning of the UAS equipment. Malfunctions shall be brought to the attention of the UAS Program Coordinator as soon as possible. Extra caution must be taken to ensure the equipment is not stored in extreme temperatures.
5. Prior to use, assigned officers shall inspect the UAS, and all related equipment, to verify proper functioning and ensure the battery is fully charged in accordance to the manufacturer's recommendations. This inspection shall include, but not be limited to:
 - A. Inspecting the body of the UAS, and the charging and camera cables to look for signs of visible damage; and
 - B. Ensuring the propeller blades are in flight worthy condition.
6. Any UAS, or related equipment, found to be not functioning properly shall be immediately taken out of service. The UAS Program Coordinator shall be notified in writing as soon as practical.

48.8.0 PROCEDURES FOR sUAS DEPLOYMENT

1. Pursuant to [725 ILCS 167/15](#), the UAS may not be used to gather information, except during the following types of situations:
 - A. To counter a high risk of a terrorist attack by a specific individual or organization, if the United States Secretary of Homeland Security determines that credible intelligence indicates there is a risk;

- B. When there are specific and articulable grounds to believe that the UAS will collect evidence of criminal wrongdoing and or if the UAS will be used in a manner that may intrude upon reasonable expectation of privacy, the Department shall obtain a search warrant prior to conducting the flight (725 ILCS 5/108-3). The warrant must be limited to a period of 45 days, renewable by a judge upon showing good cause for subsequent periods of 45 days.
- C. Upon reasonable suspicion that under particular circumstances, swift action is needed to prevent imminent harm to life, forestall the imminent escape of a suspect, or to prevent the destruction of evidence.
 - a. The use of a UAS under this paragraph is limited to a period of 48 hours.
 - b. Within 24 hours of UAS initiation under this paragraph, the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, must report the UAS use, in writing, to the applicable state's attorney;
- D. To locate a missing person while not also undertaking a criminal investigation;
- E. To obtain crime scene and traffic crash scene photography in a geographically confined and time-limited manner.
 - a. The use of the UAS under this paragraph, when on private property, requires either a search warrant or a lawful consent to search.
 - b. As it relates to lands, highways, roadways or areas belonging to the state, a search warrant or consent to search is not required.
 - c. Reasonable attempts shall be made to only photograph the crime scene or traffic crash scene and to avoid other areas;
- F. To obtain information necessary for the determination of whether a disaster or public health emergency should be declared, to manage a disaster by monitoring weather or emergency conditions, to survey damage, or to coordinate response and recovery efforts. There is no requirement that an official declaration of disaster or public health emergency prior to use.
- G. Visual Perspective: To provide an aerial visual perspective to assist officers in traffic incident management, and temporary perimeter security.
- H. To conduct an Infrastructure inspection of a designated building or structure at the express request of a local government agency.
- I. To demonstrate the capabilities and functionality of a police drone for public relations purposes.
- J. In response to Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) dispatched calls for service, when the sole purpose for using a drone is for one or more of the first responders to locate victims, to assist with immediate victim health or safety needs, or to coordinate the response of emergency vehicles and personnel to an emergency.

- K. If law enforcement agency is using a drone at a routed or special event. The use of a drone requires per [725 ILCS 167/1 sec. 15 \(10\)](#) that;
- a. A notice is posted at the event location for at least 24 hours before the event and clearly communicates drones maybe used at the upcoming event for the purpose of real-time monitoring of participant safety.
 - b. Notice is posted, if practical, at major entry points to the event that a drone may be used for the purpose of real-time monitoring of participant safety
 - c. The drone is flown in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations
 - d. In advance of an event foe the sole purpose of creating maps and determining appropriate access routes, staging areas, and traffic routes.
 - e. During the event to proactively support public safety personnel by monitoring the event footprint in real time;
 - i. To detect a breach of event space
 - ii. To evaluate crowd size and density
 - iii. To identify activity that could present a public safety issue for the crowd as a whole, including crowd movement
 - iv. To assist in the response of public safety personnel to a real-time public safety incident at the event
 - v. To assess the traffic and pedestrian flow around the event in real-time.
- L. The use of facial Recognition on a law enforcement drone under the Freedom from Drone Surveillance [725 ILCS 167/1](#) is prohibited unless either (1) the drone is being used to counter a high risk of a terrorist attack by a specific individual or organization and the United Stated Secretary of Homeland Security has determined that credible intelligence indicates that there is such a risk, or (2) the law enforcement agency possesses reasonable suspicion that, under the particular circumstances, swift action is needed to prevent imminent harm to life or to forestall the imminent escape of a suspect or the destruction of evidence
- M. The use or equipping a drone with a firearm, weaponized laser, kinetic impact projectile, chemical agent or irritant, or any other lethal or non-lethal weapon is prohibited under the Freedom from Drone Surveillance act [725 ILCS 167/1](#)

2. UAS deployments by the Department must also adhere to the operating procedures established by the FAA. FAA rules are outlined below, however, may not be limited to:

- A. Conduct a **pre-flight check** to ensure the UAS in condition for safe operation;
- B. No Remote Pilot in Command (PIC) or visual observer may operate or observe more than one UAS at a time;
- C. Must stay out of airport flight paths;
- D. Must stay out of restricted airspace areas, unless prior approval from the agency controlling the restricted airspace is obtained;
- E. Obey any FAA Temporary Flight Restrictions (<http://ftr.faa.gov/tfr2/list.html>)
- F. Keep the UAS in visual line of sight only;
 - a. The UAS must remain close enough to the RPIC or visual observer to see the aircraft with vision unaided by any device other than corrective lenses.
 - b. Use of a visual observer is authorized, but not required.
 - c. Unless Beyond Visual Line Of Sight waiver is obtained.
- G. Night operations are permitted as of April 21, 2021 given the following (2) two conditions;
 - a. The RPIC must complete an updated initial knowledge test or online recurrent training
 - b. The sUAS must have lighted anti-collision lighting visible for at least (3) statute miles that flash at a rate sufficient to avoid collision
- H. Ordinarily fly at or below 400 feet above ground level. However, may fly higher than 400 feet above ground level for inspection of an object that is not more than 400 feet horizontally from the RPIC;
- I. Fly at or below 100 mph;
- J. Fly only when the minimum weather visibility is 3 miles or greater from control station with a cloud ceiling 500 feet above the maximum operating altitude;
- K. Yield right of way to another aircraft, whether manned or unmanned;
- L. Must not fly over people not directly involved in the operation; unless Fly over People waiver is obtained or aircraft has received a airworthiness certificate under part 21 to operate over people in accordance with Category 4
- M. Must not fly from a moving vehicle, except in rural areas.
- N. Deviation from FAA procedures may be authorized in the event of an in-flight emergency; any deviations must be reported to the FAA upon request.

3. Whenever possible, if a UAS will be flying within 5 miles of hospital heliport, the UAS Program Coordinator shall complete and submit a **Notice of Airman** to the appropriate aviation authority. Additionally, notification shall be made to the respective hospital's emergency department charge nurse. All notification attempts must be documented in a case report.

4. A briefing led by the PIC, and to include the observer, will be conducted prior to aircraft launch. This briefing includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Review of the missions goals and expected outcomes
- B. Review of current and forecasted weather conditions.

- C. Review of current Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) and Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) that have been issued for the proposed flight area.
- D. Identification of mission limitations and safety issues such as battery charge, GPS signal strength, and potential for radio interference.
- E. Review of proposed flight area to include surrounding airspace and any obstructions that are present.
- F. Review of communication procedures between PIC, observer, and other personnel used to support the mission. This includes verifying phone numbers and radio frequencies used to communicate with Air Traffic Control (Lansing Airport) in the event of a flyaway or other flight emergency when operating in controlled airspace.
 - a. (708) 418-5888
 - b. 119.275 MHz
- G. Review of emergency/contingency procedures including aircraft system failure, flight termination, diversion, lost link procedures, and lost communications with ATC if applicable.
- H. Execution of a pre-flight check utilizing the operational checklist.

48.9.0 sUAS OPERATIONAL RESTRICTIONS

1. Privacy

- A. Use of the UAS involves privacy considerations. Absent a warrant or exigent circumstances, RPIC 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.
- B. RPICs and observers shall take reasonable precautions to avoid inadvertently recording or transmitting images of areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.
- C. Reasonable precautions may include, but are not limited to, deactivating or turning imaging devices away from such areas or persons during UAS operations.

2. No Department UAS shall be used to:

- A. Conduct random surveillance activities or quests for information;
- B. Target a person based solely on individual characteristics such as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- C. Harass, intimidate or discriminate against any individual or group;
- D. Conduct personal business of any type; or
- E. Any situation outside what is specifically authorized in this general order.

3. No weapons of any kind shall be attached to, or deployed by, a UAS.
4. The UAS Program Coordinator shall request a [certificate waiver](#) from the FAA which authorizes deviation from specific regulations. The certificate waiver will be granted when the FAA determines that the UAS operation can be safely conducted under the terms of the certificate waiver.
5. Personnel shall notify the UAS Program Coordinator when he/she knows, or has reason to know, that he/she has a physical or mental condition that would interfere with the safe operation of the UAS.
6. Nothing within this policy prohibits the use of a sUAS indoors for the purposes of surveillance and detection of a possible suspect within a structure, as long as officers have the right to be within the structure by way of consent, exigent circumstances or a Search Warrant.

48.10.0 DOCUMENTATION, SECURITY AND RETENTION

1. Documentation

- A. Except in emergency situations, requests to deploy a UAS flight shall be submitted in writing to the UAS Team Lead, or his/her designee. During an emergency situation where an official written request was not practical prior to use, a memorandum outlining the reason for use of the UAS shall be submitted to the UAS Team Lead as soon as practical.
- B. The RPIC shall complete a case report for any incident involving a UAS. The case report shall include the following information:
 - a. Name of person authorizing deployment;
 - b. Name and contact information for RPIC(s), visual observer(s) and witness(es);
 - c. Type of operation;
 - d. Type of device and registration number/certificate;
 - e. Event location and incident details; and
 - f. Evidence collection and submission information such as photos, video, and device confiscation, if necessary.
- C. At the conclusion of each deployment, all recordings shall be securely downloaded from the sUAS and uploaded to CLOUD.SKYDIO.COM and/or EVIDENCE.COM.
- D. Pursuant to [14 CFR 107.9](#), the program coordinator must also report any accidents to the FAA, using the [FAA DroneZone portal](#), within 10 days after any accident that includes the following situations:
 - a. Serious injury to any person or any loss of consciousness; and/or
 - b. Damage to any property, other than the UAS, unless one of the following conditions is satisfied:
 - i. The cost of repair including materials and labor does not exceed \$500.00; or
 - ii. The fair market value of the property does not exceed \$500.00 in the event of a total loss.

2. Security

- A. Personnel should be aware that recordings may contain sensitive information and are responsible for ensuring compliance to the information in this policy. A breach in security, careless handling of the recording and/or intentional release of recordings to non-authorized individuals may jeopardize relationships with citizens, subject victims to an invasion of privacy, jeopardize prosecutions and endanger the safety of individuals.
- B. All recordings are considered investigative property of the Chicago Heights Police Department.
- C. Employees shall not edit, alter, erase, duplicate, copy, share, or otherwise distribute in any manner any UAS recordings without written approval from the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, or the Village Attorney, with the exception of the initial submission into evidence.
- D. Any violations related to unauthorized edits, alterations, and dissemination of this data shall be cause for disciplinary action.
- E. The disclosure of information gathered by the UAS is prohibited except to another government agency when there is reasonable suspicion that the information contains evidence of criminal activity, or the information is relevant to an ongoing investigation or pending criminal trial ([725 ILCS 167/25](#)).

3. Retention

- A. The Records Supervisor shall ensure UAS recordings are addressed in the Department retention schedule that is currently approved by the Illinois Local Records Commission pursuant to the State of Illinois Local Records Act ([50 ILCS 205 1/9](#)).
- B. All information shall follow evidence retention and destruction procedures
 - a. Pursuant to [725 ILCS 167/20](#), within 30 days of the recording, the Department shall destroy all information gathered by the UAS, except when there is reasonable suspicion that the information contains evidence of criminal activity, or the information is relevant to an ongoing investigation or pending criminal trial.
 - b. Pursuant to [725 ILCS 167/20](#), within 24 hours of the recording, the Department shall destroy all information gathered by the sUAS regarding any routed or special event, except when there is reasonable suspicion that the information contains evidence of criminal activity, or the information is relevant to an ongoing investigation or pending criminal trial.
 - c. The Property Custodian, in cooperation with the Records Supervisor, shall ensure proper destruction

48.11.0 INFORMATION FROM PRIVATE DRONES

- 1. The department may use, or direct the acquisition of, information from private drones only for the purpose of undertaking the tasks otherwise approved for Department UAS use by this general order.

2. Private parties may voluntarily submit information acquired by the privately owned UAS to the Department.

3. Information from private UAS devices, when obtained by the Department, shall be treated with the same reporting, security and retention regulations as information obtained from a Department UAS.

It is the responsibility of all Officers, Supervisors and Civilian personnel to comply with all sections of this General Order.

This Order supersedes all previous written and unwritten policies and procedures of the Chicago Heights Police Department on the above subject.

By order of,



Chief of Police Mikal Elamin