



**ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT
OPERATIONS MANUAL**

NUMBER
FP 31.2

TITLE: *Small Unmanned Aerial Systems*

ISSUED: *11/6/24*

PAGE 1 OF 14

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines, under which small unmanned aerial systems (sUAS) may be used, and the storage, retrieval, and dissemination of images and data captured by such systems.

II. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy shall become effective immediately upon issue.

III. REFERENCES

FP 31.1 Body Worn Cameras

IV. DEFINITIONS

A. Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS): A small unmanned aircraft that does not carry a human operator, weighing less than 55 pounds on takeoff, and its associated elements, including communication links and the components that control the aircraft that are required for the safe and efficient operation of the aircraft. Also, more commonly referred to as a drone.

B. Parade: A march, procession, or other similar activity consisting of persons, animals, vehicles, or things, or any combination thereof, upon a public street, sidewalk, alley, or other public place, which requires a street closing or otherwise requires stopping or rerouting vehicular traffic because the parade will not or cannot comply with normal and usual traffic regulations or controls. A parade does not include a political protest, march, or demonstration, or other assembly protected by the First Amendment. (725 ILCS 167/5)

C. Routed Event: A parade, walk, or race that:

1. Is hosted by the State of Illinois or a county, municipality, township, or park district;
2. Is outdoors and open to the public; and has an estimated attendance of more than 50 people.
3. A routed event does not include any political protest, march, demonstration, or other assembly protected by the First Amendment. (725 ILCS 167/5).

D. Special Event: A concert or food festival that:



"To Serve and Protect"

	ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL	NUMBER <i>FP 31.2</i>
TITLE: <i>Small Unmanned Aerial Systems</i>		
	ISSUED: <i>11/6/24</i>	PAGE 2 OF 14

1. Is hosted by the State of Illinois or a county, municipality, township, or park district;
2. Is outdoors, open to the public and has an estimated attendance of 50 or more people in a unit of local government with a population that is less than 50,000.
3. A special event does not include any political protest, march, demonstration, or other assembly protected by the First Amendment. (725 ILCS 167/5).

E. Program Coordinator: Designated by the Chief of Police to be in charge of the Drone program/unit.

F. Drone Unit: Shall be comprised of the Program Coordinator as licensed remote pilots as assigned by the Chief of Police.

G. Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC): Person directly responsible for and authorized to operate a sUAS.

H. Visual Observer: Person designated by the RPIC to assist in seeing and avoiding other air traffic or objects aloft or on the ground.

I. Information: As defined in 725 ILCS 167/5 as any evidence, images, sounds, data, or other information gathered by the sUAS.

V. POLICY:

A. Authorization

1. The Chief of Police will appoint a program coordinator who will be responsible for the management of the sUAS program and Drone Unit. Only authorized operators who have completed the required training shall be permitted to operate the sUAS as an RPIC.
2. The RPIC may be temporarily removed from flight status at any time by the Program Coordinator or Chief of Police, or designee, at any time for reasons including performance or proficiency.
3. Mutual Aid requests will be forwarded to the Chief of Police or designee. The RPIC will ensure the request meets compliance with all policy and

"To Serve and Protect"



**ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT
OPERATIONS MANUAL**

NUMBER
FP 31.2

TITLE: *Small Unmanned Aerial Systems*

ISSUED: *11/6/24*

PAGE 3 OF 14

FAA regulations prior to deployment.

B. Restrictions

1. 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.
2. sUAS operations should only be conducted during daylight hours and should not be flown over populated areas without FAA approval.

C. Permitted Use

1. A sUAS may not be used to gather information except under the following conditions (725 ILCS 167/5):
 - 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. Pursuant to a search warrant based on probable cause. 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 prevent the destruction of evidence. The use of a sUAS under this paragraph is limited to a period of 48 hours. Within 24 hours of a sUAS initiation under this paragraph, the Chief of Police must report its use, in writing, to the State's Attorney.
 - d. Notification to the State's Attorney's Office shall be accomplished using the RIPD Drone Deployment form in CS Pro.
 - i. The RPIC shall complete the form and submit it to the Program Coordinator for approval.
 - ii. The Program Coordinator shall ensure the automated CS



"To Serve and Protect"

**ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT
OPERATIONS MANUAL**

NUMBER
FP 31.2

TITLE: *Small Unmanned Aerial Systems*

ISSUED: *11/6/24*

PAGE 4 OF 14

Pro email was sent to the State's Attorney's Office.

- e. If the department is not undertaking a criminal investigation but is:
 - i. Attempting to locate a missing person;
 - ii. Engaging in search and rescue operations; or
 - iii. Aiding a person who cannot otherwise be safely reached.
- f. To obtain crime scene and traffic crash scene photography in a geographically confined and time-limited manner. The use of the sUAS under this paragraph on private property requires a search warrant or lawful consent to search.
- g. 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.
- h. To conduct infrastructure inspection of a designated building or structure at the expressed request of a local government agency. Department members shall make every reasonable attempt to photograph only the building or structure and to avoid other areas.
- i. To demonstrate the capabilities and functionality of a police sUAS for public relations purposes, provided that no information is collected or recorded by the sUAS during such demonstrations.
- j. In response to Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) dispatched calls for service, when the sole purpose for using a sUAS is for one or more 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 the department is using a sUAS at a routed event or special event. The use of a sUAS under this section requires that:
 - i. Notice is posted at the event for at least twenty-four (24) hours before the event and clearly communicates that drones may be used at the upcoming event for the purpose of real-time monitoring of participant safety.



"To Serve and Protect"

**ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT
OPERATIONS MANUAL**

NUMBER
FP 31.2

TITLE: *Small Unmanned Aerial Systems*

ISSUED: *11/6/24*

PAGE 5 OF 14

- ii. Notice is posted, if practical, at major entry points to the event clearly informing the attendees that a drone may be used for the purpose of real-time monitoring of participant safety.
 - iii. The sUAS is flown in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration safety regulations.
1. Under section k (iii) above, the department may use the sUAS:
- i. In advance of an event, before participants have begun to assemble, for the sole purpose of creating maps and determining appropriate access routes, staging areas, and traffic routes, provided that no personal identifying information is recorded and provided further that no recorded information is used in any criminal prosecution; or
 - ii. During the event to proactively support public safety personnel by monitoring the event footprint in real time:
 - 1. To detect a breach of the event space, including a breach by unauthorized vehicle, an interruption of a parade route, or a breach of an event barricade or fencing;
 - 2. To evaluate crowd size or density;
 - 3. To identify activity that could present a public safety issue for the crowd as a whole, including crowd movement;
 - 4. To assist in the response of public safety personnel to a real-time public safety incident at the event; and
 - 5. To assess the traffic and pedestrian flow around the event in real time.
- m. When appropriate, notification of the sUAS will be made to the public and/or media outlets.



"To Serve and Protect"

	ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL	NUMBER <i>FP 31.2</i>
	TITLE: <i>Small Unmanned Aerial Systems</i>	
	ISSUED: <i>11/6/24</i>	PAGE 6 OF 14

- n. Whenever possible, if the sUAS will be flying within close proximity to a hospital heliport, which could create a hazardous situation for a manned aircraft, notification shall be made to the respective hospital’s security office.
- o. At the conclusion of each deployment, the recordings shall be securely downloaded and proper evidence procedures shall be followed. Videos will be uploaded to Evidence.com in accordance with current Body-Worn Camera procedures.
- p. The Program Coordinator will review all sUAS deployments and report to the Chief of Police if each deployment was within policy.
- q. All sUAS deployments require an Incident Report to be completed:
 - i. All reports will be properly coded to track sUAS deployments.
 - ii. All reports will include the permitted use description and justification.

D. Accident Reporting

- 1. The FAA requires notification of certain sUAS accidents. Pursuant to 14 CFR 107 Drone Operation and Certification Regulations, within 10 days after the accident, the RPIC must report accidents to the FAA in the following situations:
 - a. Serious injury to any person or loss of consciousness.
 - b. Damage to any property, other than the sUAS, unless one of the following conditions is satisfied:
 - i. The cost of repair including materials and labor does not exceed \$500.00
 - ii. The fair market value of the property does not exceed \$500.00 in the event of a total loss.
- 2. The RPIC is required to initiate a police report for any accident involving the sUAS. The police report shall include the following information:



"To Serve and Protect"

	ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL	NUMBER <i>FP 31.2</i>
TITLE: <i>Small Unmanned Aerial Systems</i>		
ISSUED: <i>11/6/24</i>	PAGE 7 OF 14	

- a. Name and contact information for operators and witnesses.
- b. Type of operation.
- c. Type of device and registration number/certificate.
- d. Event location and incident details.
- e. Evidence collection such as photos, video, and device confiscation, if necessary.

E. Restricted Use

- 1. The sUAS video surveillance equipment shall not be used:
 - a. To target a person based solely on individual characteristics such as, but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation.
 - b. To record data that will be collected, disseminated or retained solely for the purpose of monitoring activities protected by the U.S. Constitution, such as the First Amendment’s protections of religion, speech, press, assembly, and redress of grievances (e.g., protests, demonstrations).
 - c. To harass, intimidate or discriminate against any individual or group.
 - d. The sUAS, or images and data produced by its use, shall not be for personal business of any type. Any use of the sUAS that is not specifically related to the operation or mission of this department shall require the express authorization of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.
 - e. The sUAS shall not be weaponized. Department members are prohibited from equipping or using on a sUAS any firearm, weaponized laser, kinetic impact projectile, chemical agent or irritant, or any other lethal or non-lethal weapon. (725 ILCS 167/17)
 - f. The use of facial recognition (onboard facial recognition or



"To Serve and Protect"

software that works in conjunction with the drone), shall be prohibited unless either:

- i. The department is using a sUAS to counter a high risk of a terrorist attack by a specific individual or organization and the United States Secretary of Homeland Security has determined that credible intelligence indicates that there is such a risk; or
 - ii. The department possesses reasonable suspicion that, under 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. (725 ILCS 167/17)
2. sUAS deployments by the department must also adhere to the operating procedures established by the FAA. These rules are outlined below, but are not limited to:
 - a. Conduct a pre-flight check to ensure the sUAS is in condition for safe operation.
 - b. Keep the sUAS in visual line of sight.
 - c. Fly during day or twilight hours.
 - d. Fly at or below 400 feet above ground level.
 - e. Fly at or below 100 mph.
 - f. Yield right of way to manned aircraft.
 - g. Must not fly over people.
 - h. Must not fly from a moving vehicle, except in rural areas.
 - j. During an emergency situation, deviations from policy are permitted.
3. The 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 sUAS operation can be safely conducted under the terms of the certificate waiver.



	ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL	NUMBER <i>FP 31.2</i>
TITLE: <i>Small Unmanned Aerial Systems</i>		
ISSUED: <i>11/6/24</i>	PAGE 9 OF 14	

4. If the RPIC determines that the use of the sUAS would violate department policy or directives, the RPIC will inform the Incident Commander of the potential conflict along with recommendations for modifying the requested mission to conform to department policy and procedures.
5. The RPIC will have sole discretion for overall mission safety, identifying potential violations of FAA rules, and risks of potential damage to the sUAS or its associated equipment. If the RPIC makes this determination that any of these issues are present, the RPIC will inform the Incident Commander of the reasons for refusing to operate the sUAS and notify the sUAS Program Coordinator. The sUAS will not be flown in this circumstance and the authority of the RPIC is absolute.

F. Program Coordinator

1. The Chief of Police will designate a sergeant or lieutenant to be the sUAS Program Coordinator. The sUAS Program Coordinator will report to the Deputy Chief of Police.
2. The Program Coordinator will ensure that policies and procedures conform to current laws, regulations, and best practices and will:
 - a. Coordinate the FAA Certificate Waiver or Authorization (COA) application process and ensure that the COA is current.
 - b. Ensure 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 sUAS.
 - c. Fully document all missions.
 - d. Ensure all data intended to be used as evidence is maintained, stored, accessed, and/or retrieved in a manner that maintains 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 to preserve individual rights and to ensure the authenticity and security of the evidentiary chain of custody.
 - e. Ensure retention and purge periods are maintained in accordance



"To Serve and Protect"

	ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL	NUMBER <i>FP 31.2</i>
TITLE: <i>Small Unmanned Aerial Systems</i>		
	ISSUED: <i>11/6/24</i>	PAGE 10 OF 14

with established records retention schedules and applicable laws.

- f. Facilitate law enforcement access to images and data captured by the sUAS.
- g. Recommend program enhancements as needed.
- h. Complete monthly activity reports to the Chief of Police to include the number and type of deployments, and number of times the sUAS was deployed in assistance to another agency.

G. Training

- 1. Prior to authorization to operate a sUAS, all Drone Unit members must complete mandatory training provided by the department to obtain an understanding on how to use the sUAS and the procedures outlined in this policy.
- 2. Drone Unit members shall undergo regular refresher training as needed to ensure continued effective usage of the sUAS and related equipment. Members shall also review any updates or revisions to the FAA and/or 14 CFR 107 requirements, statutes, or department policy.

H. Retention and Disclosure of sUAS Information



- 1. Within 30 days of sUAS use, the Program Coordinator shall destroy all information gathered by the sUAS except when there is reasonable suspicion that the information contains evidence of criminal activity, if the supervisor deems that the information will be used exclusively for training purposes, provided that any such information shall not contain any personally identifiable information, or the information is relevant to an ongoing investigation or pending criminal trial. (725 ILCS 167/20)
- 2. Within 24 hours after being gathered pursuant to a routed or special event, all information gathered by the sUAS shall be destroyed. (725 ILCS 167/15 (10))
- 3. As soon as is practical, all information gathered pursuant to an infrastructure inspection shall be turned over to the requesting local government agency and all gathered information shall be destroyed immediately after being turned over.

	ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL	NUMBER <i>FP 31.2</i>
	TITLE: <i>Small Unmanned Aerial Systems</i>	
	ISSUED: <i>11/6/24</i>	PAGE 11 OF 14

4. The disclosure of information gathered by the sUAS 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)
5. The Rock Island Police Department will ensure that all data-sharing agreements, data use, and record management policies applicable to sUAS conform to the Freedom from Drone Surveillance Act. (725 ILCS 167)
6. Flightpath data, metadata, or telemetry information about the sUAS may be retained by the department.
7. All footage will be classified in accordance with FP 31.1 Body Worn Cameras.

I. Information Disclosure

1. Pursuant to 725 ILCS 167/25, the department shall not disclose any information gathered by the drone, except by a department supervisor to another government agency if 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.
2. Records of sUAS usage, including flightpath data, metadata, or telemetry information of specific flights, if available, may be disclosed to the Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140) and rules adopted under that Act.
3. The department shall neither sell any information gathered by the drone nor disclose any information gathered by the drone to any person to whom disclosure is not authorized under 725 ILCS 167/25.
4. Nothing in the Illinois Drones as First Responders Act (PA103-0101) prevents the disclosure of information through a court order or subpoena in connection with a criminal proceeding or if the disclosure is in regard to a completed traffic crash investigation.
5. When the recording does not fall under the statutory exemptions listed in 725 ILCS 167/15, documentation pertaining to use of the sUAS, such as location, date, time, and scope of the mission, is not subject to being



"To Serve and Protect"

	ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL	NUMBER <i>FP 31.2</i>
TITLE: <i>Small Unmanned Aerial Systems</i>		
ISSUED: <i>11/6/24</i>	PAGE 12 OF 14	

destroyed within the timeframes listed in 725 ILCS 167/20.

6. The retention of recordings which are exempt from the statutory destruction requirement is at the discretion of the Program Coordinator or determined by the completion of the criminal investigation or criminal trial.

J. Information Obtained from Private Drones

1. The department may utilize information from private drones only for the purpose of undertaking the tasks outlined in Section V. subsection C. entitled "Permitted Use."
2. Private parties may voluntarily submit information acquired by the privately-owned drone to the department.
3. The department shall not disclose any information gathered by a private drone. However, a supervisor may disclose information 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.

K. Assistance to Other Agencies



1. The sUAS equipment shall not be loaned to other agencies. Requests by other agencies for sUAS assistance require that a department assigned operator respond with the equipment and operate the sUAS.
2. All assists shall be approved by the Chief of Police or designee and documented in an Incident Report/Supplemental Report or CFS.
3. Assists to other agencies shall also require the completion of the RIPD Drone Deployment form in CS Pro.

L. Policy Requirements and Violations

1. The Illinois Drones as First Responders Act (PA 103-0101) requires the department to have a policy outlining sUAS use consistent with this Act. The policy shall include that, if the department learns of violations of the Act, the department shall immediately take actions to prevent future violations of the Act through any one or more of the following means; training, discipline, including progressive discipline for repeat violations,

"To Serve and Protect"

	ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL	NUMBER <i>FP 31.2</i>
TITLE: <i>Small Unmanned Aerial Systems</i>		
	ISSUED: <i>11/6/24</i>	PAGE 13 OF 14

or other means that will prevent repeated violations of the Act by law enforcement. If the department learns of willful and wanton violations of the Act, the department shall immediately remove the pilot from its drone program and take action to prevent future willful and wanton violations of the Act. (725 ILCS 167/45 a)

2. The Illinois Attorney General shall have authority to conduct investigations into patterns and practices of violations of the Illinois Drones as First Responders Act. The Attorney General may:
 - a. Require a law enforcement agency, law enforcement official, or any other person or entity to file a statement or report in writing under oath or otherwise, as to all information the Attorney General may consider necessary.
 - b. Examine under oath any law enforcement official or any other person alleged to have participated in or with knowledge of the alleged violation; or
 - c. Issue subpoenas, obtain records, conduct hearings, or take any other actions in aid of any investigation. (725 ILCS 167/45 b)
3. If a law enforcement agency, law enforcement official, or other person or entity fails to comply, in whole or in part, with a subpoena or other investigative request, the Attorney General may compel compliance through an action in the circuit court. (725 ILCS 167/45 b)
4. Following completion of an investigation, the Attorney General may, upon his or her own information or upon the complaint of any person, maintain an action for declaratory, injunctive, or any other equitable relief in the circuit court against any law enforcement agency, law enforcement official, or other person or entity who violates any provision of the Act. These remedies are in addition to, and not in substitution for, other available remedies, penalties, or disciplinary action. (725 ILCS 167/45 c)
5. Upon entry of an adverse judgement under the Act demonstrating a pattern or practice of violations of this Act, a law enforcement agency shall forfeit its ability to use drones under 725 ILCS 167/15 for not less than six (6) months for a first adverse judgement and up to one (1) year for second adverse judgement demonstrating a pattern or practice of violating the Act. (725 ILCS 167/45 d)



	ROCK ISLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL	NUMBER <i>FP 31.2</i>
	TITLE: <i>Small Unmanned Aerial Systems</i>	
	ISSUED: <i>11/6/24</i>	PAGE 14 OF 14