

Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Operations

604.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

604.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) - An unmanned aircraft or drone of any type that is capable of sustaining directed flight, whether preprogrammed or remotely controlled (commonly referred to as an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)), and all of the supporting or attached systems designed for gathering information through imaging, recording or any other means.

604.2 POLICY

Unmanned aerial systems may be utilized to enhance the department'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 strict accordance with constitutional and privacy rights and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations. Safety, above all else, is the primary concern in every operation, regardless of the nature of the mission.

604.3 AUTHORITY

1. FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (FMRA), Pub. L. No. 112-95, 126 Stat. 11 (Feb. 2012)
20 ILCS 3305/4, "Definitions"
2. 725 ILCS 5/108-3, "Grounds for search warrant"
3. 725 ILCS 167, "Freedom from Drone Surveillance Act"
4. FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (FMRA), Pub. L. No. 112-95, 126 Stat. 11 (Feb. 2012))
5. 14 CFR Ch. 1, Subch. F. Pt. 107 – Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems

604.4 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 (e.g., residence, yard, enclosure). 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.

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604.5 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.

The Sheriff's Office may not use the UAS to gather information except (725 ILCS 167/15):

- (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 UAS under this paragraph is limited to a period of 48 hours. Within 24 hours of UAS initiation under this paragraph, the Sheriff must report its use, in writing, to the State's Attorney.
- (d) To locate a missing person, engage in search and rescue operations, or aid a person who cannot otherwise be safely reached 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. The use of the UAS under this paragraph on private property requires either a search warrant or lawful consent to search.
- (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.
- (g) To conduct an inspection of the infrastructure of a designated building or structure when requested by a local government agency.
- (h) To locate victims, assist with victims' immediate health or safety needs, or coordinate the response of emergency vehicles and personnel, when dispatched to an emergency.
- (i) In advance of or during a routed event or special event, as defined in 725 ILCS 167/5, for those uses allowed under 725 ILCS 167/15.
 1. The notice for UAS use in these instances should be posted at a time, place, and manner as required by 725 ILCS 167/15.

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604.5.1 PRIVATE UAS OWNERS

This policy and its restrictions apply to the Sheriff's Office directed use of a UAS owned by a private third party and information gathered by a UAS voluntarily submitted to the Department by a private third party (725 ILCS 167/40).

604.5.2 FACIAL RECOGNITION WITH UAS

Facial recognition software onboard a UAS shall not be used during a flight (725 ILCS 167/17). Use of facial recognition software to evaluate information gathered by a UAS is permissible only under those circumstances described in 725 ILCS 167/17.

604.6 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 (725 ILCS 167/18).

604.7 RETENTION OF UAS INFORMATION

The Support Services - Records Unit supervisor shall destroy all information gathered by the UAS within the timeframe specified by law (725 ILCS 167/20).

Information may be retained by a office supervisor when (725 ILCS 167/20):

- (a) There is reasonable suspicion that the information contains evidence of criminal activity.
- (b) The information is relevant to an ongoing investigation or pending criminal trial.
- (c) The information will be used exclusively for training purposes and all personally identifiable information has been removed from it.
- (d) The information contains only flight path data, metadata, or telemetry information of the UAS.

604.8 REPORTING

The Support Services - Records Unit supervisor shall report annually, by April 1, to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority the number of UASs owned by the Sheriff's Office and any other required information to be reported under 725 ILCS 167/35.

The report shall contain a copy of the office's current UAS policy (725 ILCS 167/35).

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604.9 DISCLOSURE OF UAS INFORMATION

Information gathered during an inspection of the infrastructure of a designated building or structure shall be given, as soon as practicable, to the requesting local government agency before it is destroyed (725 ILCS 167/20).

The disclosure of information gathered by the UAS is prohibited except (725 ILCS 167/25):

- (a) 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.
- (b) Pursuant to a court order or subpoena in connection with a criminal proceeding.
- (c) In regard to a completed traffic crash investigation.

Available records of drone usage (e.g., flight path data, metadata, telemetry information of specific flights) may be disclosed subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140/1 et seq., and rules adopted under it (725 ILCS 167/25).

604.10 COMPLIANCE WITH THE FREEDOM FROM DRONE SURVEILLANCE ACT

If a determination is made that a member has violated the Act, the Sheriff's Office shall take prompt and appropriate action (e.g., training, discipline) (725 ILCS 167/45). If a determination is made that a UAS pilot has willfully violated the Act, the Sheriff's Office shall promptly remove the pilot from its UAS program and take other appropriate action (see the Personnel Complaints Policy) (725 ILCS 167/45).