

610	RAMSEY POLICE POLICY UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (UAS) OPERATIONS	
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610.01 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) and for the storage, retrieval, and dissemination of images and data captured by the UAS (Minn. Stat. § 626.19).

DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

- **Unmanned Aircraft 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 aircraft (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 (Minn. Stat. § 626.19).
- **DFR (Drone as First Responder):** A program where drones autonomously respond to emergency calls, providing real-time situational awareness.
- **BVLOS (Beyond Visual Line of Sight):** Drone operations where the remote pilot or visual observer cannot maintain unaided visual contact with the unmanned aircraft during flight.
- **Shielded Operations:** BVLOS flights conducted under 200 ft AGL. or within 100 ft laterally and 50 ft vertically of a structure or obstacle.
- **DAA (Detect-and-Avoid):** Technology used to detect and avoid other aircraft during BVLOS operations.

610.02 POLICY

Unmanned aircraft systems can be utilized to enhance the office's mission of protecting lives and property when other means and resources are unavailable or less effective. Any use of a UAS will be in strict accordance with constitutional and privacy rights, as well as Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

610.03 PRIVACY

The use of the UAS potentially involves privacy considerations. Absent a warrant or exigent circumstances, operators 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 (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.

610.04 PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Chief of Police shall designate a UAS Program Coordinator to oversee all operational, legal, and technical aspects of the UAS program, which include but are not limited to:

- Ensures compliance with FAA regulations (Part 107, Part 91.113, Part 108,), Minn. Stat. § 626.19.
- Manages FAA COA/COW and waiver applications (including BVLOS, shielded ops, and night ops), and ensures all certifications are current.
- Ensuring that all authorized operators have completed all required FAA and department-approved training in the operation, applicable laws, policies, and procedures regarding the use of the UAS.
- Maintains training records for all pilots and observers, including Part 107, BVLOS, night operations, and emergency procedures.
- Developing a uniform protocol for submission and evaluation of requests to deploy a UAS, including urgent requests made during ongoing or emerging incidents, and real-time dispatch integration (e.g., DFR), and emergency response triggers.
- Ensures all investigative UAS use is documented with legal justification, case number, written report, date/time/location info for each deployment.
- Maintains SOPs for all flight operations, including lost link, RTH, and coordination with ATC towers.
- 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.
- Developing protocols with the Records Supervisor to ensure evidentiary data complies with CJS and state retention laws.
- 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.
- The Program Coordinator shall conduct audits of BVLOS operations.
- Developing protocols for reviewing and approving requests for use of the office UAS by government entities (Minn. Stat. § 626.19).
- Preparing and submitting the required annual report to the Commissioner of Public Safety (Minn. Stat. § 626.19).
- Posting the department policies and procedures regarding the use of UAV on the department website, as applicable (Minn. Stat. § 626.19).
- Reviewing the program and UAS use for compliance with Minn. Stat. § 626.19.

610.05 USE OF UAS

- Only authorized operators who have completed the required training shall be permitted to operate the UAS.
- UAS operations should only be conducted consistent with FAA regulations.
- The use of a visual observer is encouraged whenever possible.

- The use of vision enhancement technology (e.g., thermal and other imaging equipment not generally available to the public) is permissible in viewing areas only when 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.

Members shall not use a UAS without a search warrant, except (Minn. Stat. § 626.19):

1. during or in the aftermath of an emergency situation that involves the risk of death or bodily harm to a person;
2. to document evidence that is at imminent risk of destruction;
3. over a public event where there is a heightened risk to the safety of participants or bystanders;
4. to counter the risk of a terrorist attack by a specific individual or organization if the agency determines that credible intelligence indicates a risk;
5. to prevent the loss of life and property in natural or man-made disasters and to facilitate operational planning, rescue, and recovery operations in the aftermath of these disasters;
6. to conduct a threat assessment in anticipation of a specific event;
7. to collect information from a public area if there is reasonable suspicion of criminal activity;
8. to collect information for crash reconstruction purposes after a serious or deadly collision occurring on a public road;
9. over a private area with the written consent of the occupant or a public area, for officer training or public relations purposes;
10. for purposes unrelated to law enforcement at the request of a government entity provided that the government entity makes the request in writing to the law enforcement agency and specifies the reason for the request and proposed period of use; and
11. to facilitate the active search for a missing person.

Pilots have direct authority to reject a flight based on weather, aircraft limitations, physical condition, risk to public safety personnel or civilians, etc. No member of any law enforcement agency, regardless of rank, can order a pilot to make a flight when, in the opinion of the pilot, it cannot be done safely and within FAA regulations.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

Each use of a UAS should be properly documented by providing the following (Minn. Stat. § 626.19):

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

610.06 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.

ADDITIONAL PROHIBITIONS

- The UAS shall not be weaponized (Minn. Stat. § 626.19).
- Unless authorized by a warrant, a UAS shall not be deployed with facial recognition or biometric matching technology (Minn. Stat. § 626.19).
- Unless authorized by a warrant or an exception applies from Minn. Stat. 626.16 Subd. 3, a UAS shall not be used to collect data on public protests or demonstrations (Minn. Stat. § 626.19).

610.07 REPORTS

All UAS flights, including training flights, shall be documented with a case number, a factual basis for the use of the UAS, and the applicable exception under Minn. Stat. 626.16 Subd. 3, or if a warrant was obtained. It is the responsibility of the UAS pilot to ensure the documentation is completed after each flight.

610.08 RETENTION OF UAS DATA

The Records Division and Drone Operators 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 (Minn. Stat. § 626.19).