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# Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) Standard Operating Procedure

## 600.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish guidelines for the use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) by the Lewisville Police Department
- Establish guidelines for the storage, retrieval, and dissemination of data captured by the UAS.

This policy applies to all Lewisville Police Department employees who perform or manage unmanned aircraft operations. Any unmanned aircraft flown by Lewisville Police Department personnel, during their scheduled work shift or for official Lewisville Police Department business, must adhere to this policy.

### 600.1.1 DEFINITIONS

**COA** - Certificate of Authorization, issued by the Air Traffic Organization to a public operator for a specific unmanned aircraft activity.

**Crewmember** - Any person involved in the operation of a sUAS including but not limited to the Remote Pilot in Command, Person Operating the Controls, Visual Observer, or Limited Use Pilot in Command.

**DFR** - Drone as First Responder. A type of unmanned aircraft operation where unmanned aircraft are strategically deployed from predetermined locations to respond to emergency situations, with the goal to arrive before first responders.

**Drone** - A common term for sUA.

**FAA** - Federal Aviation Administration.

**GCS** - Ground Control Station. This is an sUAS component that the Remote Pilot interacts with to operate the aircraft (e.g., a handheld controller, a computer, etc).

**NAS** - National Airspace System.

**Part 107** - Federal rules governing the use of commercial, small UAS operations in the United States.

**Part 91** - Federal Aviation Administration rules that govern general operating and flight rules in the National Airspace System. These rules also govern the operation of sUAS when operated as a public aircraft under a public safety COA.

**sUA** - Small Unmanned Aircraft. This term refers to the unmanned aircraft itself, not the controller or other associated equipment.

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**sUAS** - Small Unmanned Aircraft System. This term encompasses the unmanned aircraft, the ground control station, and any other supporting equipment used to conduct flight operations. Small specifically refers to an aircraft that weighs less than 55 pounds.

**sUAS Media** - The video and images captured by the department's UAS's and the associated metadata. This does not include flight telemetry data used for diagnostics and repair.

#### **600.2 OBJECTIVES**

The Lewisville Police Department is committed to the responsible use of UAS through:

1. Clear Oversight and Accountability
2. Community Trust, Engagement, and Transparency
3. Civil Liberties and Privacy Protection
4. Common Operating Procedures
5. Cybersecurity

#### **600.3 OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

##### 600.3.1 CHAIN OF COMMAND

- The sUAS Unit is assigned to the Operations Bureau.
- The sUAS Unit Captain is directly accountable to the Operations Assistant Chief.
- The sUAS Sergeant is directly accountable to the sUAS Captain.
- The sUAS Remote Pilot in command is directly accountable to the sUAS Unit Captain and sUAS Sergeant.
- The sUAS Visual Observer is directly accountable to the sUAS Pilot in Command.

##### 600.3.2 THE SUAS UNIT CAPTAIN WILL:

- Manage the sUAS program strategically and administratively.
- Designate an sUAS Sergeant.
- Designate Training Cadre.
- Review and approve budgetary funding requests relevant to the sUAS program.
- Review and approve reports completed by sUAS Sergeant.
- Review and approve sUAS personnel selections and deselections.
- Review and approve training curriculum for sUAS program.
- Review and audit (spot check) quarterly inventory completed by sUAS Training Cadre.
- Liaise with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), as necessary.
- Liaise with relevant entities supporting the usage of sUAS technology (e.g., educational, commercial interest, associations, etc.).

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- Be accountable for the sUAS standard operating procedure and relevant policies.
- Maintain monthly documentation of UAS deployments and provide them to FAA upon request.
- Report bi-annual usage of sUAS to the Texas Department of Public Safety as required by Statute when applicable.
- Maintain Certificate of Authorization (COA) applications, Certificate of Waiver (COW) applications, and renewal applications according to appropriate FAA timelines.
- Develop and maintain the SOP for the sUAS program.

#### 600.3.3 THE SUAS UNIT SERGEANT WILL:

- Serve as the acting sUAS Captain in their absence.
- Manage the sUAS program operationally.
- Complete timely registration of new aircraft.
- Ensure all personnel have met FAA requirements as set forth by COA.
- Ensure safe and lawful operation of sUAS.
- Develop and maintain a training calendar and designate required training standards.
- Conduct and document required training.
- Ensure all sUAS personnel are flight-ready, according to COA.
- Ensure timely Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) filings.
- Review requests for sUAS deployment outside Lewisville Jurisdiction when applicable.
- Ensure flight data and maintenance logs are up to date.
- Develop and maintain appropriate sUAS checklists.
- Ensure all maintenance items are properly completed by the vendor or trained sUAS personnel.
- Serve as Remote Pilot In Command (RPIC) or Visual Observer on sUAS flights when needed.
- Authorize the launch of a sUAS outside the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Lewisville upon an approved mutual aid request.
- Create standards for the launch of sUAS by RPIC.
- Obtain and maintain a Part 107 Certification from the FAA.
- Develop readiness standards and qualifications for the sUAS.
- Maintain a list of flight-ready sUAS team members.
- Maintain a list of equipment for the sUAS team.

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- Attend training and conferences as approved.
- Ensure the DFR Transparency Dashboard is updated regularly (i.e., monthly).
- Work with the sUAS Captain and Training Cadre to develop sUAS Unit training.
- Inspect all sUAS equipment for damage or modifications quarterly.
- Complete a full sUAS inventory quarterly.
- Conduct Hard-Landing/aircraft incident Investigations.
- Maintain a list of approved and qualified RPICs.
- Coordinate with the Lewisville Fire Department Drone Unit for all applicable purposes.

#### 600.3.4 THE sUAS ASSISTANT TEAM LEADER WILL:

- Serve as the acting sUAS Unit Sergeant in their absence.
- Assist in managing the administrative and operational aspects of the sUAS team.
- Assist in evaluating sUAS Unit Members.
- Serve as the Lead sUAS Unit Training Cadre.
- Assist in developing readiness standards and qualifications for the sUAS.
- Demonstrate operational readiness with the sUAS operated by LPD.
- Build and retain knowledge regarding the sUAS unit.
- Work with the sUAS Training Cadre to develop sUAS team training.

#### 600.3.5 THE REMOTE PILOT IN COMMAND (RPIC) SHALL:

- Serve as sUAS primary pilot when designated.
- Hold sole authority and responsibility to launch or not launch a sUAS.
- Obtain and maintain an FAA Part 107 Certification.
- Ensure sUAS batteries are charged and installed correctly according to the sUAS checklist.
- Assess all deployment aspects to determine if operations are compliant in consideration of weather, airspace, and surroundings.
- Ensure all checklists are followed during all flight phases.
- Communicate any issues, such as mechanical concerns, affecting the operation of the sUAS to the sUAS Sergeant.
- Complete all the required training as designated by the Captain.
- Document all mechanical issues in the appropriate maintenance log.
- Report hard landings to the sUAS Unit Sergeant.

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- Be eligible to serve as a member of the Training Cadre.

#### 600.3.6 THE VISUAL OBSERVER (VO) SHALL:

- Serve as sUAS observer when designated.
- Assist RPIC with flight checklists.
- Monitor flight area and communicate factors that could impact operational safety to the RPIC.
- Maintain continuous observation of the sUAS and provide necessary updates to the RPIC.
- Assume the responsibilities of the RPIC if the assigned RPIC cannot continue the sUAS flight, provided qualifications are met.
- Successfully complete the Visual Observer Certification Course developed by the sUAS Unit every 2 years.

#### **600.4 PRIVACY**

The Lewisville Police Department sUAS program shall promote and protect privacy and civil liberties. Absent a warrant or exigent circumstances, operators and observers shall adhere to FAA regulations. They shall not intentionally record or transmit images of any location where a person would have a reasonable expectation of privacy. 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 include, though are not limited to, deactivating or turning imaging devices away from such areas or people during UAS operations.

**Imaging/recording devices shall be activated only to collect sUAS Media when over the affected location.**

The use and dissemination of information gathered by a sUAS shall be limited to the extent necessary to facilitate a criminal investigation or prosecution, or other lawfully authorized reasons. The sUAS Unit Captain will conduct an annual privacy assessment of the department's sUAS policies to ensure compliance with existing local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and policies relating to privacy and civil liberties. Where appropriate, the Captain will recommend amendments to existing department policies or guidelines regarding the sUAS program to the Assistant Chief.

#### **600.5 PROCUREMENT**

The sUAS Unit Captain is responsible for reviewing and approving the purchase of unmanned aircraft and supporting equipment in accordance with Lewisville Police Department procurement policies. The Captain will coordinate with the Assistant Chief to submit any budgetary requests in accordance with City policy.

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#### **600.6 UNIT OPERATIONS**

Operations shall be conducted in accordance with federal, state, and local laws, as well as other departmental or City policies. Crewmembers will adhere to all Federal Aviation Regulations (Part 107, Part 91, and others), the conditions and limitations of any applicable FAA operational approvals, and any relevant state and local regulations.

#### **600.7 AUTHORIZED USES**

Only Lewisville Police Department-authorized operators who have completed the required training shall be authorized to deploy the sUAS system for the following purposes:

1. Responding to any emergency call for service (police, fire, medical, and/or public safety) in the normal course of business;
2. Apprehension of criminal offenders, including, but not limited to, locating and apprehending criminal offenders, supporting warrant service, supporting critical incidents such as barricaded suspects, and pursuing fleeing criminal offenders;
3. Protecting life and property, including, but not limited to, search, rescue, disaster response, terrorism, mass casualty incidents, crime and accident scene documentation and reconstruction, or response to individuals in physical or mental distress;
4. Support of other government agency activities and functions, including, but not limited to, infrastructure inspections, marketing, emergency management and disaster response, or surveying and mapping.
5. UAS program readiness activities including, but not limited to, training, certification, evaluation, and maintenance.

#### **600.8 PROHIBITED USES**

Lewisville Police Department will not use unmanned aircraft for the following purposes:

1. To conduct random and/or mass surveillance unrelated to public safety official operations;
2. To conduct activities prohibited by any applicable local, state, or federal law;
3. To conduct any operation or activity that violates laws applicable to search and seizure.
4. UAS shall not be equipped with any weapon.

#### **600.9 DRONE AS FIRST RESPONDER (DFR)**

Under authorization from the FAA, the Lewisville Police Department operates a Drone as First Responder (DFR) program to enhance public safety, protect first responders, and improve service to the community.

The DFR program is capable of deploying sUAS beyond the visual line of sight for public safety calls, critical incidents, and other authorized operations. DFR operations are designed to:

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1. Improve responder safety by providing real-time video to first responders prior to arrival on-scene.
2. Enhance response times by assessing situations quickly and relaying critical information to field personnel.
3. Increase efficiency by determining when an in-person response is unnecessary, such as when a suspect or vehicle has left the area or when the situation has otherwise resolved itself.

Personnel shall track DFR usage in a call for service, and outcomes should be noted in sUAS reporting systems.

The sUAS Captain may adjust the types of calls to which DFR responds to meet operational needs. The sUAS Captain will also prepare periodic reports evaluating DFR performance. The Department will use these reports to track effectiveness, ensure accountability, and make strategic and operational adjustments as necessary.

The DFR program will operate in conjunction with the Department's UAS Transparency Dashboard to ensure public visibility into its use. All DFR deployments will be documented and, when appropriate, published in accordance with the Transparency Dashboard guidelines. The Department will engage in ongoing community outreach and education regarding the DFR program to promote transparency, accountability, and public trust.

#### **600.10 UAS DATA, EVIDENCE COLLECTION, AND RETENTION**

sUAS Media shall be managed, stored, and retained in accordance with established Lewisville Police Department policies and procedures governing the handling of Digital Media Evidence, such as BWC Media, and in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.

#### **600.11 TRANSPARENCY DASHBOARD**

The Lewisville Police Department is committed to transparency and public accountability in its use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). The Department will maintain a publicly accessible Transparency Dashboard to provide insight into UAS operations.

##### **600.11.1 FLIGHTS INCLUDED**

The Transparency Dashboard will include the following UAS operations:

- All Drone as First Responder (DFR) deployments (including BVLOS operations)
- All UAS flights conducted for calls for service
- Any UAS flight where sUAS media is captured
- Training flights conducted in public areas
- Flights conducted in support of other agencies or City functions

##### **600.11.2 FLIGHTS EXCLUDED OR DELAYED**

Certain flights may be temporarily withheld or delayed from publication when:

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- Release would compromise an active investigation
- Release would endanger officers, victims, or the public
- Release would reveal sensitive law enforcement tactics, locations, or capabilities

Any withheld flight will be reviewed by the sUAS Captain and released when appropriate.

#### 600.11.3 INFORMATION PUBLISHED

Each flight entry on the Transparency Dashboard will include:

- Date and time of the flight
- Generalized location (e.g., block-level or grid-based, not exact address)
- Type of operation:
  - DFR (BVLOS)
  - Traditional UAS (Visual Line of Sight / Part 107 or COA)
  - Training
  - Support / Administrative
- Purpose of the flight
- Associated Call for Service number (if applicable)
- Whether sUAS media was captured

#### 600.11.4 UPDATE FREQUENCY

The sUAS Sergeant will review applicable flights and update the Transparency Dashboard twice a month.

#### 600.11.5 OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW

If the sUAS Sergeant believes that releasing a flight may pose a risk to officer safety or jeopardize an investigation, the request to withhold will be evaluated by the sUAS Captain for final determination.

#### 600.11.6 PROGRAM REPORTING

The sUAS Unit shall produce summary reports quarterly and annually that include:

- Total number of UAS flights
- Breakdown of flight types (DFR, traditional, training, support)
- General outcomes of DFR deployments (e.g., suspect located, call resolved prior to arrival)
- Any identified trends or operational improvements

### **600.12 LIVESTREAMING PLATFORMS**

Access to livestreamed small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) video is limited to authorized department or city personnel with a legitimate law enforcement purpose. Authorization may be

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granted by the department, and access credentials shall not be shared with any unauthorized individual.

To maintain operational security, the authorized streaming platform shall be secured with a Personal Identification Number (PIN), which will be updated regularly.

Personnel are prohibited from capturing screenshots or screen recordings of any sUAS livestream on personal devices. Any images or videos captured from a livestream, whether intentional or inadvertent, shall be uploaded to the department's designated evidence management system and tagged with the associated case or incident number. The sUAS Sergeant shall be notified of any such media captures within 24 hours.