

**Burleson Police Department  
Administrative Policy and Procedures**

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ISSUING AUTHORITY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Billy Cordell, Chief of Police

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## I. ADMINISTRATION:

## PHILOSOPHY, PURPOSE, AND POLICY:

## A. Philosophy:

Small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) provide agencies with a safe, practical, and affordable aviation platform with which to further the law enforcement mission.

## B. Purpose:

The purpose of the sUAS is to assist the Burleson Police Department in its mission to protect life and property, collect data for evidence, intelligence, disasters, and hazardous incidents.

## C. Policy:

It is the policy of the Burleson Police Department to operate the sUAS in accordance with applicable state and federal law guided by the Certificate of Authorization (COA) issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). This policy is designed to minimize risk to people, property, and aircraft during the operation of the sUAS while continuing to safeguard the right to privacy of all persons according to the United States Constitution. The program will utilize "Best Practices" to ensure public safety.

## D. Standard Operating Procedure Manual:

The sUAS Standard Operating Procedures Manual is issued by authority of the Police Chief.

1. The Accreditation Manager shall ensure that an electronic version of the manual and any revisions are placed on the BPD Intranet, Police Portal, and the current document management system. All employees will have access to the manual. [12.2.1.c.]
2. Each sUAS program members shall provide electronic acknowledgment of receipt of this SOP and any revisions that follow.
3. The Accreditation Manager shall obtain and keep on file electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the electronic version and any revisions from each employee assigned to the sUAS program according to the records retention schedule.

## DEFINITIONS:

A. *sUAS* – Small Unmanned Aircraft System

B. *sUAS Program Manager* – The individual responsible for reviewing and approving the use of the sUAS in a law enforcement mission. The sUAS Program Manager has full oversight responsibility of all logistical and administrative elements of sUAS operations.

C. *Team Leader* – The individual responsible for assisting the sUAS Program Manager with administrative functions related to the sUAS program, including maintaining a current list of all equipment that could be placed on the sUAS during operations. The Team Leader is also responsible for the condition and maintenance of the sUAS. [41.1.3c & d]

- D. *Pilot in Command (PIC)* – The individual responsible for the overall flight operations of a specific mission. The PIC is the person in control of the sUAS during flight.
- E. *Observer* – A person acting as a flight crew member who assists the small UA remote PIC and the person manipulating the controls to see and avoid other air traffic or objects aloft or on the ground.
- F. *Defined Incident Perimeter* – A defined perimeter determined based on the scope of the operation and applicable FAA requirements.
- G. *Pre-Flight Briefing* – a discussion led by the PIC prior to aircraft launch Which shall include but not be limited to:
- Review of mission goals and methods to achieve goals, including handoff procedures.
  - Review of current and forecasted weather conditions and weather limitations on mission;
  - Identification of mission limitations and safety issues such as battery charge, GPS strength, and potential for radio interference;
  - Review of proposed flight area, including maximum ceiling and floor;
  - Review of emergency/contingency procedures; and
  - Review of required video or digital images.
- H. *Public Certificate of Authorization* – Authorization by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to conduct governmental operations within the National Airspace System (NAS), within the boundaries of a public aircraft not for hire or compensation. All personnel connected with the sUAS operation must read and comply with the contents of the authorization and its provisions. This shall include the issuance and maintenance of an FAA Certificate of Authorization (COA). All BPD use of sUAS aircraft should be under the authority of a COA whenever practicable.
- I. *Notice to Airman (NOTAM)* – A notice issued by the FAA to inform pilots of changes to airports, airways, and local procedures that affect safety.

## II. ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

### CHAIN OF COMMAND:

- A. The sUAS program is assigned to the Support Bureau.
1. The sUAS Program Manager is directly accountable to the Support Bureau Captain.
  2. The sUAS Team Leader is directly accountable to the sUAS Program Manager.
  3. The sUAS Pilot in command is directly accountable to the sUAS Team Leader.
  4. The sUAS Observer is directly accountable to the sUAS pilot in command or sUAS Team Leader.

### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. The sUAS Program Manager shall:
1. Manage the sUAS program both administratively and operationally.
  2. Liaise with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as necessary.
  3. Liaise with relevant entities supporting the usage of sUAS technology (E.g. educational, commercial interests, associations, etc.)
  4. Maintain Certificate of Authorization (COA) applications and renewal applications according to appropriate FAA timelines.
  5. Maintain Letter of Agreement with Air Traffic Control.
  6. Complete timely registration of new aircraft.
  7. Develop and maintain the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the sUAS program.
  8. Report monthly usage of sUAS aircraft to the FAA.
  9. Ensure safe and lawful operation of sUAS.
  10. Designate a sUAS Team Leader.
- B. The Team Leader shall:
1. Identify and select personnel to serve on sUAS team.
  2. Ensure all personnel have met FAA requirements as set forth by COA.
  3. Develop and maintain a training calendar.
  4. Carry out and document monthly training.
  5. Ensure all sUAS personnel are flight ready, according to COA.
  6. Ensure timely Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) filings.
  7. Review requests for sUAS deployment, and route requests to sUAS Program Manager.
  8. Act as sUAS Program Manager when designated to do so.
  9. Develop and maintain appropriate sUAS checklists.
  10. Ensure all maintenance items are properly completed by vendor or trained sUAS personnel.
  11. Notify sUAS program manager of any sUAS mishaps.
  12. Serve as PIC or Observer on sUAS flights when needed.
- C. The Pilot in Command shall:
1. Serve as sUAS primary pilot when designated.
  2. Ensure sUAS batteries are charged and installed properly according to the sUAS checklist.
  3. Evaluate all deployment characteristics to determine “go/no-go” for sUAS flights (e.g. weather, airspace, surrounding area).
  4. Ensure all checklists are followed during all flight phases.

5. Maintain sterile cockpit procedures during all sUAS flights. All persons who are not members of the sUAS crew will maintain a distance from the PIC. The payload imagery may be remoted to another location to be reviewed by non-crew members. Communications from non-crew members to the sUAS crew will be routed through a single point of contact designated by the PIC.
  6. Notify sUAS Team Leader in a timely manner of any mechanical issues affecting the sUAS aircraft or flight.
  7. Notify the sUAS Team Leader in a timely manner of any mishaps affecting the sUAS aircraft.
  8. Document all flights in the appropriate flight log.
  9. Document all mechanical issues in the appropriate maintenance logbook.
  10. Authorize the launch of sUAS upon valid request
- D. The Observer shall:
1. Serve as sUAS observer when designated
  2. Assist PIC with flight checklists.
  3. After the PIC inspects/install flight battery, verify sUAS batteries are charged and installed properly according to the sUAS checklist.
  4. Observe flight area and report to PIC anything that could affect the sUAS flight.
  5. Maintain sterile cockpit procedures during all sUAS flights.
  6. Monitor sUAS flight time, and report regularly to the PIC.
  7. Act as PIC if PIC cannot continue sUAS flight.
- E. Pilot in Command (PIC): [\[41.1.3b\]](#)
1. Initial Training – Complete necessary certification and training.
  2. All pilots must undergo training to increase specific core competencies in all sUAS operations, systems and roles with conducting a mission in accordance with the COA. This training is in addition to initial certification and training. [\[43.1.3b\]](#)
  3. All sUAS personnel shall be trained by either manufacturer representatives or approved instructors as designated by the program manager. The sUAS pilots shall meet all conditions of the COA.
  4. Currency. All PICs must have a minimum of three sUAS take-offs and landings in the preceding 90 days to be eligible to fly sUAS missions.
    - a. In order to accomplish required currency and in-service training, PICs shall participate in training as outlined by the program manager.
    - b. Recurrent training is not limited to actual pilot/observer skills, but includes knowledge of all pertinent sUAS and aviation matters including crew coordination skills.
    - c. All sUAS personnel shall read the current COA and maintain proficiency in their operator/observer abilities. Personnel who do not have

documented training or flight time for the preceding 90 days shall not be allowed to fly until they have meet the minimum standards.

- d. Failure to maintain/prove proficiency can result in removal from the sUAS program.
5. In-service Training – All sUAS personnel must undergo in-service training every 12 months to include updated industry standards and field exercises, as well as a review of current case law governing the use of aviation assets as designated by the Program Manager. [41.1.3b]
- F. Observer: An Observer is required for all flights of the sUAS.
  1. Initial Training - sUAS Observers shall have a basic understanding of their responsibilities to ensure the PIC has situational awareness while operating the sUAS. Observers will have a current working knowledge of the airspace intended for operations, Air Traffic Control phraseology, communications requirements, and the ability to obtain and interpret weather. [41.1.3b]
  2. Pre-flight Briefing - Observers must attend the pre-flight briefing.
  3. Post-flight debriefing – Observer must participate in a post-flight debriefing.

### III. OPERATIONS

#### EQUIPMENT:

- A. Camera and Remote Sensing Equipment: The sUAS personnel shall receive specific training on camera and sensing equipment operations, including recording and storing digital data for evidentiary purposes prior to assisting with mission flights. [41.1.3b]

#### FLIGHT GUIDELINES:

- A. Flight Operations: [41.1.3a]
  1. All sUAS operations shall be conducted in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, within the perimeters of the COA and departmental policy.
  2. All sUAS operations shall be conducted within line-of-sight of the PIC or Observer.
  3. All flights shall be conducted at less than 400 feet Above Ground Level (AGL), unless exempted by the COA or approved by FAA.
  4. All flights shall be conducted under VFR (Visual Flight Rules).
  5. The PIC is responsible for obtaining current weather reports. All sUAS flights shall be conducted under weather minimums as set forth in the COA. Flights under Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC) are prohibited. Flight operations are not authorized in known icing conditions.
  6. If at any time the PIC and/or Observer believe there is a potential for air-to-air conflict, risk of harm to individuals or property, the PIC shall immediately land the aircraft.

7. In the event of lost communications with the aircraft, lost link procedures shall be executed. If the aircraft does not immediately execute these orders or the PIC loses visual contact, the PIC shall notify the appropriate ATC facility.
8. An application for a special government interest (SGI) or temporary flight restrictions (TFR) must have prior approval from the sUAS Program Manager before being submitted to the FAA.

B. Operating Guidelines: [41.1.3a]

1. The operational guidelines for heat are less than 110 degrees Fahrenheit at ground level. Operation in temperatures over 110 degrees Fahrenheit should be noted with the air density as obtained from the pre-flight weather report. The battery and length of flight should be adjusted accordingly based upon high humidity and temperature with air density. These local conditions may warrant the PIC opting to not fly based upon these flight conditions.
2. The operational guidelines for cold are greater than zero degrees Fahrenheit at ground level. Operation in temperatures under zero degrees Fahrenheit should be noted with the air density as obtained from the pre-flight weather report. The battery and length of flight should be adjusted accordingly. Also, if the moisture level is high, conditions should be noted for icing on wings and flight surfaces. These conditions may warrant the PIC opting to not fly based upon these flight conditions.
3. The sUAS shall be operated within the manufacture specifications.
4. The operational guidelines for these conditions are based upon visibility and operator safety at the local site. The PIC and Observer must adhere to the line-of-sight and VFR weather minimum requirements.
5. The PIC, sUAS Team Leader, or sUAS Program Manager may, at their discretion opt not to fly, despite being requested to fly, for operational conditions that exceed the limitations of the COA, manufacturer guidelines, or any other safety consideration deemed relevant by the PIC. The decision to not fly may not be overridden by a member of the department with more rank or authority over that of the PIC, Team Leader, or Program Manager.

C. Flight Requirements:

1. All requests for sUAS to provide support for a mission shall be forwarded to the sUAS Program Manager or Team Leader.
2. Considerations for use of sUAS shall include the following:
  - a. the defined incident perimeter including airspace considerations;
  - b. all sUAS flights shall be coordinated with the appropriate air-traffic control facility. All coordination shall be done in accordance with any requirements in the COA issued by the FAA.
  - c. the weather and its potential effect on the aircraft;
  - d. the sUAS currency of the PIC and Observer;
  - e. any other relevant risk factors to successfully complete the specific mission; and
  - f. GPS and radio signal considerations within the defined incident perimeter.

3. The Team Leader shall identify the PIC, Observer, and site security personnel as needed. [41.1.3a]
  - a. Notice to Airmen (NOTAM):
    1. A NOTAM shall be issued whenever flight operations are scheduled or required by a COA or Part 107 waiver.
    2. A NOTAM may be accomplished by contacting the NOTAM Flight Service Station at (1-877-487-6867) or <https://www.1800wxbrief.com/Website/#/> not more than 72 hours in advance, but not less than 48 hours prior to the operation, unless otherwise authorized as a special provision.
    3. The issuing agency will require the:
      - i. Name and address of the pilot filing the NOTAM request;
      - ii. Location, altitude, or operating area;
      - iii. Radial off nearest airport
      - iv. Time and nature of the activity.
  - b. The PIC and Observer are responsible for identifying any unsafe conditions at the scene. This includes, but is not limited to:  
Take-off and landing site: This area should be free of obstructions, items on the ground and debris that may interfere with the rotors. This includes creation of a flight line, from which other law enforcement officers and civilians must remain clear.
  - c. Security perimeter: The site must be safeguarded to minimize civilian interference during the operation.
  - d. Flight area: The PIC and Observer should identify potential obstructions and coordinate the pre-flight briefing accordingly.
  - e. Interference: The PIC and Observer should identify sources, which might create interference with the flight equipment. The equipment should be tested on the ground to insure proper communications and operation before the flight.
  - f. The PIC and Observer shall utilize the current sUAS flight checklist.
4. Coordination with ATC: The City of Burleson has a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the Fort Worth Spinks Airport. Pursuant to the LOA, the PIC and/or Observer shall maintain communication with the appropriate ATC facility and have the ability to respond to ATC instructions as set forth by the COA and LOA.
  - a. The PIC must not accept ATC instructions that require visual separation from the sUAS.
  - b. ATC may assign a radio frequency for air traffic during the flight.
  - c. ATC may assign an alternate method of communication (e.g. telephone).
  - d. As soon as reasonable after all sUAS flights are concluded, the PIC or designee shall notify the appropriate ATC facility of sUAS flight conclusion.
5. A copy of the current COA, flight log, and pilot certifications must be accessible at all times.

## D. Aircraft:

1. General Airworthiness - The Team Leader shall be responsible for ensuring that the sUAS is maintained and flight ready according to the manufacturer's recommendations and related industry standards. In addition, the Team Leader may rely upon the testing data and evaluation data provided by other government agencies, the aircraft manufacturer, and independent testing facilities. The Team Leader is responsible for the maintenance of the sUAS, which shall be performed by any person specifically, trained on the maintenance of the sUAS or by manufacturer certified representatives and personnel. It shall be the responsibility of the Team Leader to determine whether the reported maintenance issues need to be corrected prior to the next flight, which shall then be documented in the aircraft's maintenance log book. [41.1.3c]
2. Maintenance - The PIC shall be responsible for ensuring that the sUAS is airworthy prior to each mission. The PIC may rely upon the inspection and reports provided by agency personnel appointed with the responsibility for maintaining the sUAS.
3. The sUAS shall use the assigned radio frequencies issued by the FAA when requested.
4. The PIC and Observer shall perform a pre-flight and post-flight inspection of the sUAS. Any equipment issues shall be entered in the aircraft's maintenance log and immediately reported to the Team Leader.
5. Software and hardware changes - All aircraft changes shall be documented in the aircraft, maintenance log by persons authorized to conduct sUAS maintenance. All previously proven systems, to include payloads, may be installed or removed as required for missions and documented in the appropriate aircraft, maintenance log book. Test flights must be conducted and documented after major changes in the hardware or software.
6. Storage - The aircraft shall be stored and transported in a secure manner to limit possible damage to the aircraft or its components while in transit. Batteries must be transported in an appropriate container to prevent possible damage to the batteries.
7. Battery Charge - Any components necessitating a charged battery shall be charged in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations, the sUAS shall be fully charged when not in use.

## PROHIBITED ACTS: [41.1.3a]

- A. The sUAS shall not be operated in violation of the Texas and United States Constitution, statutes, or regulations. Where required, a search warrant shall be obtained. When a recognized warrant exception exists, sUAS flight is permitted.
- B. The sUAS shall not be flown in conditions that exceed the manufacturer's recommended limitations, including range, ceiling, wind strength, and battery charge.
- C. The sUAS shall not be flown for any mission wherein the Team Leader or the PIC determines the risk of flying the sUAS outweighs the benefit to the mission. Risks may include hazards to individuals or property on the ground, possible

collision hazard with other aircraft, loss of control of the sUAS. The PIC has sole accountability for sUAS flight determination.

- D. The PIC is prohibited from spraying or dropping anything from the aircraft and carrying hazardous materials unless authorized by the PM and is mission essential.
- E. The sUAS flights shall comply with current federal, COA regulations regarding Class B, C, D, E, and G airspaces.
- F. Unless authorized by the FAA only one sUAS shall be operated in a defined incident perimeter, by a single point of control, and by one pilot at a time.
- G. Unless authorized by the FAA, daisy-chaining (Observers to extend line-of-sight) is prohibited.
- H. sUAS flights are prohibited when other manned aircraft are operating within the defined incident perimeter.
- I. As a public use aircraft, flying for compensation or hire is prohibited. Cost reimbursement between government units is permitted.

#### **USE of FORCE:**

- A. Operating a sUAS that has a dangerous weapon attached to it is a violation of Section 363 of the 2018 FAA Reauthorization Act enacted Oct. 5, 2018. "Dangerous Weapon" means any item that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury.
- B. sUAS shall not be utilized for use of force unless the action is to safe guard human life or serious bodily injury.

#### **DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING**

- A. The PIC or their designee shall complete all flight documentation including pertinent information about the aircraft, flight conditions, type of mission, and mission parameters. Monthly reports containing the above information or indicating no flights occurred during the month shall be submitted to the FAA by the sUAS Program Manager or Team Leader.
- B. The FAA requires notification of certain sUAS accidents (14 CFR §107.9) No later than ten (10) days after an operation resulting in serious injury to any person, loss of consciousness, or damage to any property greater than \$500 (other than to the sUAS), the PIC must report the incident to the FAA. Incident reports may be made online if acceptable to the Administrator of the FAA. The sUAS Program Manager shall be responsible for insuring any incidents or crashes are reported to the FAA and supply any additional documentation that may be required.
- C. If the terms of the COA require the incident to be reported immediately, the terms of the COA shall take precedence.
- D. FAA Report Submission:
  - 1. Any incident or accident that occurs while operating under a COA can be reported to the FAA via the CAPS On-Line Accident/Incident Report and Initially reported via email at:
    - a. [9-AJV-115-UASOrganization@faa.gov](mailto:9-AJV-115-UASOrganization@faa.gov)

2. All other incidents/accident report may be submitted to the FAA Regional Operations Center by phone at 817-222-5006 or electronically at [http://www.faa.gov/about/office\\_org/field\\_offices/fsdo/](http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/field_offices/fsdo/).
  3. The report should include the following information:
    - a. UAS PIC's name and contact information;
    - b. UAS PIC's FAA airman certificate number;
    - c. UAS registration number issued to the aircraft, if required;
    - d. Location of the accident;
    - e. Date of the accident;
    - f. Person(s) injured and extent of injury, if any or known;
    - g. Property damaged and extent of damage, if any or known; and
    - h. Description of what happened.
- E. NTSB Reporting Criteria:
1. All accidents/mishaps involving UAS operations, where any of the following occur, shall be reported to the NTSB in compliance with 49 CFR § 830.2:
    - a. Any person suffers death or serious injury;
    - b. Flight control system malfunction or failure such as a fly-away;
    - c. Inflight fire;
    - d. Aircraft collision in flight;
    - e. More than \$25,000 damage to objects other than the aircraft;
    - f. Release of all or a portion of a propeller blade from an aircraft, excluding release caused solely ground contact.
  2. All incidents or accidents are required to be reported to the NTSB as soon as reasonable practicable and before any additional flights occur.
- F. NTSB Report Submission:
1. All incident/accident reports may be reported to the NYSB's Response Operations Center at 844-373-9922.
  2. The report should include the following information:
    - a. Type and registration marks on the UAS;
    - b. Name of owner and operator on the UAS;
    - c. Name of the PIC;
    - d. Date and time of the accident;
    - e. Location of the operating are; and
    - f. Nature of the accident, the weather and the extent of damage to the UAS.
- G. Video and/or photographs:
1. In Flight Video: The sUAS is not required to activate the onboard video recorder during training missions, or any mission designated by the sUAS Program Manager , PIC, or sUAS Team Leader where recorded video is not integral to the mission of the sUAS.
  2. Evidence Procedures:
    - a. Any video evidence obtained during flight shall be stored in accordance with evidence collection policies and procedures.
    - b. Any video deemed non-evidentiary shall be deleted with approval of the sUAS Program Manager.

- c. The PIC is responsible for downloading the in-flight video to the designated City computer server.
  - d. The PIC is responsible for notifying the lead investigator for the mission in which the sUAS was operated that in-flight video evidence is available for their case.
  - e. The lead investigator shall facilitate recovery of the in-flight video and submission as evidence with the case.
3. Retention: The in-flight video recordings shall be retained in accordance with the city's retention policy.
  4. Open Records Requests: In-flight video recordings shall be considered subject to open records requests as any other police document. Recordings shall not be released without the approval of the Assistant City Attorney assigned to review the open records request.

#### EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

1. Loss of sUAS Flight Control (Lost Link) - The sUAS lost link procedures shall be set for fifteen (15) seconds to the rally point response which shall automatically cause the sUAS to climb to its ceiling altitude, return to and land at the launch site unless flight control is regained. If positive control of the sUAS cannot be maintained and the sUAS departs the area of operation or the sUAS poses a risk to life or property, the PIC will attempt to kill the engine. The PIC/VO shall contact the ATC immediately.
2. Loss of Visual Contact - If visual contact of the sUAS is lost, the PIC shall command the sUAS into a hover mode at which time attempts to reestablish visual contact will be made. If visual contact cannot be reestablished within a reasonable time, then the lost link procedures shall be executed.
3. Emergency of Fly-Away Procedure:
  - a. In the event if a fly-away or than emergency scenario while operating In controlled airspace, designated crewmembers will immediately notify ATC or nearest controlling facility
  - b. The crewmember will state PIC intentions, and provide the following:
    1. The nature of the emergency
    2. Last known UAS position, altitude and direction of flight, and
    3. Maximum remaining flight time.
4. Loss of GPS Signal - Should the sUAS lose GPS signal during operations, the PIC must immediately command the sUAS into manual mode and land the sUAS as soon as possible. If positive control of the sUAS cannot be maintained and the sUAS is departing the area of operation or the sUAS poses risk to life or property, the PIC will issue an engine kill command.
5. Loss of sUAS Power (Engine Failure) - In the event of engine failure or crash, the PIC/ officers on scene will immediately attempt to locate the sUAS, assess the scene for injuries and/or damage and render first aide as appropriate.
6. Manned Aircraft vs sUAS - In the event that a manned aircraft is observed in the path of the sUAS, the PIC will immediately attempt to move out of the path of the manned aircraft and if required shall issue a kill engine command. **Manned aircraft ALWAYS have the right of way.**