



| DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL | | |
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| CHAPTER 240 | OPERATION OF SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (SUAS) | |
|  | Effective: 9/5/2024 | Commissioner Approval:  |
| | Authorities: AS 18.65.900 – AS 18.65.909 | |
| | Applicability: ALL DEPARTMENTAL EMPLOYEES | |
| | Special Instructions: | |

240.100 INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of this chapter. The policies and procedures in this chapter govern the operation of State-owned or leased Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS). All pilots and aircraft support personnel are responsible to read, understand and follow all policies contained within this chapter.

The Department, recognizing the benefit of a strong sUAS program also recognizes the potential liability and negative public perception that having a sUAS program can bring. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the approved uses of sUAS, the training requirements and the mission requirements involved with operating sUAS.

B. DPS sUAS purpose. The primary purpose of DPS sUAS program is to accomplish DPS missions and serve the public within the State of Alaska. A secondary purpose is to support local and Federal law enforcement agencies and other state agencies. It is the policy of DPS to provide an optimally safe environment for flight crews, the public and the National Airspace System (NAS) in all sUAS operations. Safe flight operation is a primary responsibility of all personnel.

C. Commissioner oversees all sUAS operations. Ultimate responsibility for DPS aircraft operations to include sUAS rests with the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. The Commissioner delegates all oversight responsibility for sUAS to the DPS Aircraft Section.

D. Pilots will be DPS authorized pilots. The department utilizes DPS authorized sUAS pilots. Whenever an employee is designated as a department sUAS pilot, the sUAS pilot duties are in addition to and subordinate to the individual's regular employee duties. Regardless, an employee designated as a department sUAS pilot must always consider the assignment as a department sUAS pilot as a professional assignment.

E. Privacy The protection of personal privacy rights of Alaskans is of primary importance and consideration. Personnel operating a DPS sUAS shall be mindful of privacy rights and absent a warrant or judicially recognized exception, shall not intentionally record or transmit images/video in any location where a person would have a reasonable expectation of privacy. Personnel will take reasonable precautions to avoid inadvertently recording or transmitting imagery in violation of privacy rights.

240.300 SUAS AUTHORIZED USE

A. *Purpose of DPS sUAS aircraft.* DPS owns and maintains sUAS for the specific purpose of providing specialized aircraft to meet the unique needs of local, state and federal law enforcement, other public safety missions and, when practical, support to other state agencies.

B. *DPS sUAS may only be used for the following types of operations;*

1. Search and Rescue operations to include urban searches for missing children and vulnerable adults.
2. Documentation and mapping of serious injury and fatal motor vehicle collision scenes.
3. Documentation and mapping of crime scenes.
4. Tactical or high-risk incidents for officer safety concerns and observations.
5. Natural disaster response and scene evaluation.
6. Hazardous Materials or Man-made disaster scenes.
7. sUAS training exercises and public appearances.
8. Recruitment and public education.
9. Documenting of Fire and Life Safety scenes.
10. Any instance a supervisor/commander deems the deployment of a sUAS at a public safety incident has reasonable potential to contribute to a successful outcome. These deployments must comply with all portions of this OPM chapter and applicable state statutes.

C. *Prohibited use of DPS sUAS.* DPS sUAS shall not be used:

1. To conduct random surveillance activities.
2. To target a person or groups of people based solely on individual characteristics such as, but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation.
3. To harass, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual or group.
4. To conduct personal business or benefit of any type.
5. During the course of any personal hunting, trapping, or fishing.

D. *The DPS sUAS fleet is managed by the DPS Aircraft Section.* DPS sUAS shall be operated and maintained under rigid standards designed to provide safety, mission efficiency, and cost effectiveness. DPS sUAS will only be operated by personnel, both pilots and crew members, who have been trained and certified in the operation of DPS sUAS systems.

240.310 ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. *DPS Aircraft Section Responsibilities.*** The DPS Aircraft Section is responsible for managing all DPS sUAS operations. This includes the supervision of all DPS sUAS flight operations, oversight of pilot training, certification, flight safety, and sUAS system maintenance (both in-house and contracted).
- B. *DPS personnel who require sUAS training.*** All DPS personnel with sUAS responsibilities, including detachment commanders, will be provided training in the policies, procedures and acceptable uses of DPS sUAS systems.
- C. *Pilot in Command's Responsibilities.*** Personnel assigned as pilot in command (PIC) of a DPS sUAS will be in command of the operation of that system regardless of rank. The PIC will always determine if conditions are acceptable for the use of DPS sUAS systems.

240.320 SUAS SAFETY POLICY

- A. *Need to mitigate inherent risk.*** The DPS mission entails certain inherent risks. These risks must be recognized, managed, and mitigated. Damage to sUAS equipment, and injury to persons, has a human cost and reduces the ability of DPS to perform its mission. Accidents are costly, reduce efficiency, and take aircraft and personnel out of service. They cannot be afforded, are not acceptable, and are not simply “the cost of doing business.”
- B. *Heightened operational risk management principles apply to sUAS operations, whether stand alone or in conjunction with other DPS operations.*** Because sUAS operate in the NAS, considerations are added to normal DPS risk assessments in order to protect the safety of manned aviation. Compliance with the DPS jurisdictional Certificate of Authorization (COA) issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is therefore a critical element of safety risk assessment for sUAS operations, along with assessment of local air traffic, obstacles, etc.
- C. *DPS sUAS minimum operational requirements.*** All DPS sUAS operations will include a minimum crew of one PIC and one sUAS observer. The PIC and observer will maintain communications at all times during a DPS sUAS operation.
- D. *Reporting requirements for all sUAS incident.*** Any incident involving a DPS sUAS, such as an accident, injury, or property damage, must be reported immediately to the relevant detachment commander and the DPS Aircraft Section. This excludes normal maintenance items such as chipped and cracked propellers or dirt and water ingress. . This may be accomplished in writing or verbally, followed up with a written notification. “Immediately” for this section means as soon as possible once any emergency situation has safely resolved and the risk to people/property has abated. The DPS Aircraft Section will evaluate the incident and determine if further reporting of the incident to the FAA will be required.

E. ***Failure to report sUAS incident consequences.*** Failure to immediately report a sUAS incident may result in a suspension or revocation of the pilot's flight status and/or disciplinary action.

240.330 SUAS DATA RETENTION

A. ***sUAS collected images and video.*** Recorded images and video of an evidentiary nature will be retained in accordance with applicable policies. Non-evidentiary related imagery may only be retained if required by state/federal law or for training purposes. All other recorded images shall be deleted by the pilot within 30 days.

B. ***Dissemination of sUAS media.*** sUAS collected images/video shall not be disseminated outside of the agency unless dissemination is required by law, or fulfills an authorized purpose and complies with agency requirements.

C. ***Flight Telemetry Data.*** Flight telemetry data will be captured and maintained in accordance with applicable state statutes. All DPS sUAS operations including missions and training flights, will capture and upload flight telemetry data to the appropriate server or web-based platform [AS 18.65.900 – AS 18.65.903].