

## **8.50 Drone as a First Responder Program**

### **8.50.010 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to address the use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) as a First Responder by the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department (MNPD).

### **8.50.020 Policy**

It is the policy of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department to utilize available UAS technology to support calls for service. The technology serves to improve the delivery of police services within the city of Nashville and contribute to increased public safety for our citizens and visitors.

The MNPD shall comply with all federal, state, local laws and FAA regulations and waivers regarding the use of UAS technology.

### **8.50.030 Definitions**

- A. **Aircraft:** Any device used or intended for flight in the air.
- B. **Certificate / Certification:** FAA Part 107 remote pilot certificate demonstrating knowledge of UAS regulations and safe operation.
- C. **Community Safety Center (CSC):** The CSC is a physical location where remote pilots fly the UAS and cameras are viewed to support patrol and detectives working active cases.
- D. **Drone as a First Responder (DFR):** Strategically placed autonomous or semi-autonomous drones to respond to calls of service before or during an officer's response.
- E. **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA):** The U.S. agency responsible for regulating civil aviation and ensuring airspace safety.
- F. **Flight Crew:** Includes at least a Pilot-in-Command and/or a Visual Observer; may include additional pilots or observers.
- G. **Pilot:** A certified police department member who operates the UAS using a controller.
- H. **Program Manager / Program Coordinator:** A designated supervisor responsible for oversight of the UAS program, including training, inventory, maintenance, compliance reporting, and FAA incident reporting.

- I. **Remote Pilot:** An FAA-certified operator who has passed the Part 107 knowledge test or holds a Part 61 certificate with additional training.
- J. **Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS):** A UAS, including all associated control systems, and equipment. Includes flight stabilization tech, camera (with thermal imaging), storage/transmission systems, speaker, and charging equipment.
- K. **Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS):** A complete system that includes the drone (UAS), controller, software, and support equipment.
- L. **Visual Observer (VO):** A trained member who assists the operator by maintaining visual contact with the UAS and monitoring for hazards.

#### **8.50.040 Authorized Uses**

- A. The Program Manager, or designee, shall have approval authority of all UAS deployment requests.
- B. UAS operations shall only be conducted by FAA-certified remote pilots having fulfilled approved training and approved by the Program Manager, when they serve legitimate public safety or law enforcement functions, and in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding the use of UAS technology.
- C. Each flight crew may include:
  - 1. A Pilot-in-Command (PIC) with final authority over the mission, and
  - 2. A Visual Observer, when required by FAA regulations or departmental policy.
- D. UAS DFR Aircraft may be deployed within a two (2) mile radius of its launch base for law enforcement operations including:
  - 1. Active criminal investigations
    - Real-time immediate aerial support for in-progress crimes or fleeing suspects.
  - 2. Tactical/emergency operations
    - a. Barricaded suspects/Hostage situations (Code 3000)
    - b. High-risk warrant service (10-43)

c. Officer-involved critical incidents (5000, 10-37P)

d. Additional Thousand Codes:

- (1) 1000 Bank Robbery,
- (2) 2000 Aircraft Crash,
- (3) 4000 Sniper,
- (4) 6000 Riot/Disorderly Crowd,
- (5) 7000 Train Derailment,
- (6) 8000 Explosion, and
- (7) 9000 Confirmed Active Deadly Aggression/Mass Violence.

3. Dispatched calls for service

a. Any Code 3 Call for Service

b. Traffic Crashes (10-45, 10-46)

c. Including but not limited to the following additional investigative calls for service (in-progress and alarm):

- (1) 10-35 Mentally Ill Person,
- (2) 10-40 Suspicious Person,
- (3) 10-41 Domestic Disturbance,
- (4) 10-42 Intoxicated Person,
- (5) 10-44 Disorderly Person,
- (6) 10-49 Vehicle Blocking Right of Way,
- (7) 10-50 Theft,
- (8) 10-51 Cutting/Stabbing,
- (9) 10-52 Shooting,
- (10) 10-53 Holdup/Robbery,
- (11) 10-54 Person with Weapon,
- (12) 10-57 Fight/Assault,
- (13) 10-58 Prowler,
- (14) 10-59 Person Indecently Exposed,
- (15) 10-61 Fire,
- (16) 10-63 Suicidal Person,
- (17) 10-66 Bomb Threat,
- (18) 10-67 Rape,
- (19) 10-68 Kidnapping,
- (20) 10-70 Burglary-Residence,
- (21) 10-71 Burglary-Non-Residence,
- (22) 10-72 Item/Vehicle is Stolen,
- (23) 10-80 Child Abuse,
- (24) 10-83 Shots Fired, and

(25) 10-85 Prisoner Escape.

4. Search and rescue operations
  - a. Missing persons (10-75),
  - b. Lost or endangered individuals (10-75), and
  - c. Area searches in hazardous or inaccessible terrain.
5. Disaster response
  - a. Natural disasters (e.g., tornadoes, floods),
  - b. Hazardous materials incidents (7000, 8000), and
  - c. Infrastructure damage assessments.
6. Documentation of crime and traffic crash scenes
  - a. Aerial photography and video for evidence preservation, and
  - b. Scene mapping and reconstruction.
7. Circumstances, although not listed above, which create an imminent risk to public safety.
8. Training exercises
  - a. Scenario-based training for UAS operators, and
  - b. System testing and proficiency evaluations.

#### **8.50.050 Prohibited Uses**

The following uses of MNPd UAS equipment are specifically prohibited:

- A. Arming the UAS with a weapon of any kind;
- B. Surveillance of individuals lawfully exercising their freedom of speech, press, association, assembly, or religion unless there is a reason to believe that criminal activity is occurring or about to occur;
- C. Recording or transmission of data from areas where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, unless pursuant to a search warrant or judicially recognized exception, or

D. Use with facial recognition technology.

**8.50.060 Oversight Responsibility of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Drone as a First Responder Program**

The MNPD UAS DFR Program Manager shall be a MNPD supervisor having the rank of Captain, at a minimum, who shall have supervisory oversight of the UAS DFR Program.

The Program Manager shall be responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Ensuring training and certifications for all UAS personnel are completed and maintained,
- B. Compliance with Federal, State, and City ordinances, laws and regulations,
- C. Equipment inventory and maintenance,
- D. Compliance reporting,
- E. FAA incident reporting,
- F. Operational coordination with the Community Safety Center, and
- G. Conducting quarterly audits of flight logs, data access, and equipment status.

**8.50.070 Community Safety Center Integration**

A. The CSC shall:

- 1. Monitor live UAS video feeds during active deployments,
- 2. Coordinate with field units to enhance situational awareness, and
- 3. Assist with incident documentation and evidence preservation.

B. CSC personnel shall:

- 1. Be trained in UAS video interpretation and data handling, and
- 2. Maintain all data retention and access protocols as outlined in MNPD Manual 8.50.080.

### **8.50.080 Data Collection, Retention, and Management**

- A. UAS may collect video, thermal, and metadata only during authorized deployments. Data collection shall be incident-driven and mission-specific.
- B. Data Retention
  - 1. UAS data will be retained in accordance with MNPD Manual 12.10, 12.30, and local, state, and federal law.
  - 2. Video that is discovered to have evidentiary value will be collected in accordance with established department procedures and legal requirements (e.g., administrator's consent, search warrant, etc.).
  - 3. Evidentiary video that has been retained by the department will be uploaded to the current digital evidence management system and will be retained in accordance with established department procedures. (Refer to Departmental Manual 6.10, Evidence Storage Division.)
  - 4. Video not having evidentiary value shall be purged after seven (7) calendar days.
  - 5. The Program Manager shall have responsibility for ensuring timely purging of data, documentation of purging, and conducting audits for compliance not less than on a quarterly basis .
- C. Release of Data
  - 1. Data may be released by UAS personnel to other law enforcement officials for legitimate law enforcement purposes, with Program Manager, or designee, approval.
  - 2. All non-law enforcement related requests for the release of UAS data shall be forwarded to the Records Division for handling per established department procedures and applicable open records laws.
  - 3. Any unauthorized release of archived UAS video is prohibited and may result in corrective or disciplinary action.

### **8.50.090 Equipment**

- A. All MNPD UAS equipment must be:

1. Registered with the FAA,
  2. Maintained in accordance with manufacturer specifications,
  3. Inspected on a scheduled and documented basis, and
  4. Be logged into the department's UAS inventory system.
- B. MNPD UAS equipment includes, but is not limited to:
1. UAS (drone),
  2. Rotor blades,
  3. Batteries,
  4. Docking station, and
  5. Controller.
- C. **Only department-issued UAS equipment may be used for official operations. The use of personally owned UAS equipment is prohibited.**

#### **8.50.100 Training**

- A. All MNPD UAS operators shall obtain and maintain a valid FAA Remote Pilot Certificate in accordance with 14 CFR Part 107 or Part 61.
- B. Prior to deployment, all MNPD UAS operators shall complete department-approved training, to include instruction on:
1. FAA regulations and MNPD UAS policy,
  2. State law regarding the use and operation of UAS,
  3. Relevant constitutional criminal law,
  4. Emergency procedures (e.g., lost link, crash response),
  5. Night operations and thermal imaging (if applicable), and
  6. Scenario-based flight training in urban and tactical environments.
- C. Ongoing proficiency training shall include:
1. Quarterly flight evaluations in varied conditions,

2. Annual refresher training on legal and policy updates, and
3. Participation in joint training exercises with other units.

#### **8.50.110 Community Engagement**

- A. MNPD shall maintain a public-facing webpage dedicated to the UAS program. This page will include the program's purpose and scope, authorized uses, data retention and privacy policies, and contact information for public feedback.
- B. MNPD will host public meetings at least once per year to provide updates on the UAS program, solicit community feedback, and address concerns related to privacy, safety, and civil liberties.
- C. Additional community engagement efforts may include presentations at neighborhood association meetings, participation in community forums and public safety events, and online surveys or comment portals to gather public input.
- D. The Program Manager shall be responsible for the publication of an annual report that includes the number and types of UAS deployments, data retention and access summaries, and community feedback and complaint summaries.

#### **8.50.120 Duty to Intervene**

In accordance with departmental policy provisions regarding the duty to intervene, it is both a legal and moral obligation of MNPD employees, under the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, Oath of Office and MNPD policy to intervene and report any act that violates law or policy. Every member of the MNPD has the individual responsibility to intervene and stop any other member from committing an unlawful or improper act, including but not limited to, acts of brutality, abuses of process, abuses of authority, and any other criminal acts or major violations of department rules and procedures. Successful intervention enhances police legitimacy by preventing misconduct and reducing opportunities for mistakes.

UAS pilots shall immediately notify a UAS supervisor in response to an unlawful incident or event that has taken place. The UAS supervisor will make notifications to on-scene supervisors.