

	DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT KA 'OIHANA HO'OKŌ KĀNĀWAI	POLICY NO: LAW.01.47
	Policy and Procedures	Effective Date:
	Subject:	Approved By:
	UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS	Jared Redulla, Director Page 1 of 11
Version Control:		

1.0 **PURPOSE**

To establish an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) in the Department of Law Enforcement with a Drone as First Responder (DFR) program.

This policy is intended to promote the safe, efficient, and lawful operation of the Department's drone program, or UAS, to maximize enforcement capability for the purpose of public safety. This is in accordance with the department's mission of engaging in just, transparent, unbiased and responsive law enforcement, and working collaboratively with the community to build trust and respect.

2.0 **SCOPE**

This statewide policy applies to all department employees, including remote operators, dispatch personnel, and manned UAS deployment units.

3.0 **POLICY**

The Department shall operate its unmanned aircrafts (drones) and conduct its Drone as First Responder program in accordance with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations in Title 14 CFR parts 91 and 107.

4.0 **DEFINITIONS AND FORMS**

4.1 **Definitions**

- a. Automated Launch/Docking Station: A specialized ground station used in DFR programs that houses, charges, protects, and launches an automated UAS via remote command.
- b. Certificate of Waiver or Authorization: Authorization issued by the FAA granting operational approval to conduct specified UAS flights or to deviate from standard regulations under 14 CFR Part 107. When operating under a waiver, a copy of the FAA approval document, including all special limitations, must be readily available at the operational command center during operations.

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- c. Department: The Department of Law Enforcement, or DLE
- d. Deployment: Active UAS flight operations excluding training and practice.
- e. Director: The Director of the Department of Law Enforcement.
- f. Drone as First Responder (DFR): An emergency response where unmanned aircrafts (drones) are pre-positioned at automated launch/docking stations that are remotely deployed immediately upon receipt of an eligible 911 call or emergency request. DFRs provide real-time aerial situational awareness to remote pilots, command personnel, dispatchers and responding personnel.
- g. Emergency Request: A request which requires the immediate response of aerial drone support and where an unnecessary delay could result in loss of life, loss of property, flight from apprehension, or decay of evidence significant to the investigation.
- h. Employee: Any person employed by the Department of Law Enforcement on a permanent, temporary, or exempt basis. For purposes of this policy, the term employee includes volunteers.
- i. Executive Protection: A specialized unit in the Department that provides protective services for state officials and other government dignitaries and employees.
- j. Incident Command: Refers to the commander or official in charge of a UAS mission, whether remote or on-scene.
- k. Labeling: The attaching of identifying information of the law enforcement incident to an UAS recording (e.g., incident/report number and incident date).
- l. Manned UAS Field Deployment: Refers to tactical UAS missions where an authorized UAS team physically transports, launches, and operates an aircraft on-scene.
- m. Real Time Operations Center (RTOC): The Department's centralized command hub that integrates live public safety technology to give law enforcement authorities immediate and actionable intelligence during active incidents.

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- n. Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC): A person who holds a current FAA Remote Pilot Certification as defined by 14 CFR part 107. The RPIC is responsible for the operation of the UAS, even when not physically operating the UAS. All flight decisions made by the RPIC are final.
- o. Security Element (SE): In a manned deployment mission, an individual focused on maintaining a safe security perimeter for the UAS Crew to operate in.
- p. Small Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS): A drone system that includes the necessary equipment, network, and personnel to control an unmanned aircraft that weighs less than fifty-five (55) pounds.
- q. Transparency Dashboard: A publicly accessible, cloud-based website that allow public safety and law enforcement agencies and other organizations to share drone mission data with their local communities to build trust and accountability.
- r. UAS Pilot/Crew Member Flight Log: A document for a UAS operation that contains the mission summary (e.g., specifics of the request, performance, abnormalities, date and time, etc.), identifies the operator, observer, and the total time that the aircraft was in flight.
- s. UAS Program Coordinator: The individual designated by the Director who is responsible for the overall management, compliance, and auditing of the Department's UAS program. The UAS program includes the DFR program.
- t. Visual Observer (VO): A UAS crew member for a flight mission whose purpose is to scan the airspace where the UAS is operating for any potential collision hazard; and maintain awareness of the position of the UAS through direct visual observation. The VO must maintain effective communication with the RPIC at all times.

4.2 Forms

- a. LAW 0930 UAS Operational Checklist
- b. LAW 0931 UAS Post-Flight Checklist
- c. LAW UAS Operational Flight Log
- d. LAW DFR UAS Inspection Attestation

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- e. LAW Quarterly UAS Pilot Proficiency

5.0 **PROCEDURES**

5.1 UAS Program Structure

- a. The Director shall designate a UAS Program Coordinator who shall be responsible for the overall management of the UAS, to include regulatory compliance, administrative tracking of UAS functions, and aircraft condition and maintenance.
- b. The UAS Program shall operate out of the operational sections within the Law Enforcement division.
- c. Section command shall work in direct coordination with the UAS Program Coordinator, Communications/Dispatch and the Real-Time Operations Center (RTOC).
- d. Only personnel certified under FAA Part 107, explicitly trained, and authorized by the UAS Program Coordinator shall operate or pilot an unmanned aircraft under the UAS program.
- e. Selection and training criteria, standards, and training records shall be maintained by the UAS Program Coordinator and submitted to the Training Division of the Law Enforcement Standard Accreditation Office to be part of the employee's official training records.

5.2 UAS Operations

- a. Privacy Thresholds: UAS operators shall not intentionally record or monitor non-involved individuals in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. If a UAS is deployed to assist in a search warrant execution, an exigent field operation or DFR call for service, the camera shall remain focused on the immediate target structure/area, or suspect vehicle. Operators shall avoid panning across neighboring properties, windows, or adjacent private backyards unless operational safety dictates otherwise.
- b. De-escalation of Recording: If the camera captures third-party individuals or uninvolved bystanders who are not part of the active threat, the RPIC shall immediately adjust the camera field of view or zoom settings to limit the exposure of those individuals from the recording, provided doing so does not compromise officer safety.

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- c. Transit Privacy: When a UAS is traveling to or from a dispatched incident or a field launch site, the camera shall be pitched forward or deactivated to minimize recording residential spaces during transit, unless immediate emergency situational awareness is required along the direct flight path.
- d. Night Operations: For field operations conducted between sunset and sunrise, the aircraft shall be equipped with anti-collision lighting visible for at least 3 statute miles. The RPIC may dim, but shall not extinguish, these lights if specific tactical safety considerations require it.
- e. Reporting: Following a field mission, the RPIC shall fill out Form LAW 0931 Post-Flight Checklist and log all details into the LAW UAS Operational Flight Log.
- f. Following a flight deployment, the RPIC shall fill out Form LAW 0931 Post-Flight Checklist and log all details into the LAW UAS Operational Flight Log.
- g. Any UAS shall be operated in a manner that minimizes the potential impact on the well-being of local wildlife.
- h. The UAS shall in no circumstances be adapted for use as a weapon.

5.3 DFR Deployments

- a. The UAS Program Coordinator shall obtain all applicable FAA certificates of waiver, air space authorizations and issue notifications relating to any affected military air space prior to launching any DFR unmanned aircraft. All authorizations shall be maintained and remain active.
- b. Operational Command: The DFR Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC) is responsible for the operation of the UAS, even when not physically operating the UAS. All flight decisions made by the RPIC are final. The RPIC shall maintain continuous communication with dispatch and ground units. The RPIC, in consultation with on-scene incident command staff, shall retain final authority regardless of Incident Command rank or order to abort a mission if weather conditions, airspace conflicts, or mechanical failures pose a hazard to safety.

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- c. Authorized DFR Use: DFR drones shall only be launched in direct response to specific calls for service routed through the department's Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system or at the explicit request of field personnel for eligible incidences. Eligible incidents shall be limited to:
1. High-priority calls or violent crimes in progress requiring immediate situational awareness.
 2. High-risk tactical operations (e.g., active threats, barricaded subjects, hostage situations).
 3. Search and rescue operations.
 4. Hazardous material incidents or major disaster assessments.
 5. Major traffic collisions impacting critical transit infrastructure.
 6. Pre-authorized specialized missions supporting mass gatherings, protest events or executive protection details.
 7. Training purposes.
 8. Testing and maintenance of aircraft.
- d. Prohibited DFR Missions: DFR drones shall not be used for the following activities or purpose:
1. To conduct random surveillance or patrol sweeps not related to law enforcement purposes.
 2. To target a person or group of persons 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, political opinion or disability.
 3. To harass or intimidate any individual or group.
 4. To conduct personal business of any type.

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5.4 Manned Deployments

Manned field deployments are tactical UAS missions where an authorized UAS team physically transports, launches, and operates an aircraft on-scene, as opposed to remote deployment for DFR operations.

- a. Pre-Launch Verification: Prior to any field launch, the pilot or RPIC shall verify that all UAS flight systems are working properly using Form LAW 0930 UAS Operational Checklist.
- b. Authorization Thresholds: Field teams shall not deploy a UAS over private property where an individual has a reasonable expectation of privacy without first securing a valid warrant, unless one of the following exigent circumstances exist:
 1. Pursuit of a fleeing suspect.
 2. Imminent threat to life, health, or safety of an individual (e.g., active shooter, missing endangered person).
 3. Imminent destruction of evidence or a localized homeland security emergency.
- c. Crew Staffing Requirements: Every manned field deployment shall utilize a minimum of three personnel: one certified Remote Pilot in Charge (RPIC) focused strictly on flying the aircraft, at least one Visual Observer (VO) focused on scanning the physical airspace for collision hazards and a Security Element (SE), of one or more, focused on maintaining a safe security perimeter for the UAS Crew to operate in.
- d. Scene Command Structure: The RPIC shall maintain direct communication with the on-scene Incident Commander (IC) or designated supervisor. The IC or supervisor shall dictate tactical objectives. The RPIC, in consultation with the IC or supervisor, shall maintain ultimate command of flight safety and retain absolute authority to deny or abort a flight if safety limits are breached.

5.5 Specialized Operations

- a. Mass Gathering Events: UAS deployments for scheduled, large-scale public events (e.g., concerts, parades, sports) shall require prior written approval from incident command. Flights shall focus

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exclusively on overall crowd ingress/egress safety, traffic management, and perimeter security. Drones shall not be flown directly over open-air assemblies of people unless the aircraft meets FAA Category 1-4 for Operations Over People regulations, or a specific FAA certificate of waiver.

- b. Mass Protest Events: UAS deployments at events protected by the First Amendment (e.g., political rallies, marches, demonstrations) shall be strictly limited as follows:
 - a. Flights shall require direct authorization from incident command.
 - b. UAS drones shall be activated if there is a documented, reasonable suspicion that public safety may be at risk, or a violent criminal disruption is possibly imminent.
 - c. UAS technology shall never be used to intimidate, deter, or profile individuals peacefully exercising their constitutional rights.
- c. Executive Protection: UAS deployments supporting the security of dignitaries or high-profile officials shall be coordinated through the lead supervisor or tactical commander.
 - 1. UAS flights shall be utilized for advanced route reconnaissance, counter-sniper overwatch, and counter-surveillance sweeps of the venue or motorcade path.
 - 2. If a DFR station sits within an active executive protection zone, its launch protocols shall be integrated into the detail's unified command structure to ensure airspace deconfliction.

5.6 Outside Agency Requests

- a. Director Approval: All outside agency requests for DLE drone use or operational support shall be reviewed and approved by the Director. The UAS Program Coordinator shall submit outside agency requests received to the Director for approval or direction.
- b. Evidence Obtained in Mission Led by an Outside Agency: Any video, image or digital evidence captured by an aircraft owned by DLE for a mission or investigation led by an outside agency shall be immediately turned over to that agency at the conclusion of each flight. Upon confirmation that evidence is securely uploaded by the agency, the

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department shall be securely purged from the UAS platform and connected cloud storage

- c. The Department shall not retain in its custody any video, image or digital evidence for any outside agency.

5.7 Department Evidence

1. Retention and Chain of Custody: All recorded media generated during joint or multi-agency operations shall be labeled and maintained in accordance with DLE evidence retention protocols.
2. Mandatory Evidence Uploads: All recordings containing evidentiary value, including all photos captured during manned field missions, tactical operations, or criminal incidents shall be labeled, categorized, and uploaded securely to the DLE evidence management system. The field RPIC shall ensure all evidentiary media captured during a field deployment is securely uploaded. All evidence obtained from the UAS shall be documented in an investigation report.

5.8 Data Retention

- a. Non-Evidentiary Purging: All non-evidentiary, non-criminal, or accidentally-captured video or images shall be securely and automatically purged from the UAS platform and connected cloud storage after a period of ninety (90) days. This includes field training flights, equipment testing, or unvalidated calls for service
- b. All video, photographic or digital evidence obtained during a UAS operation shall be documented in an incident report and securely stored in the Department's evidence management system.
- c. UAS uploads shall be purged after a period of 90 days, unless the evidence is deemed to be part of an active investigation, pending conferral of charges, or legal proceedings.

5.9 Public Access

- a. General Policy: The DLE shall maintain a level of transparency regarding UAS and DFR operations to ensure public trust, foster mutual respect, and safeguard the privacy protections of the community.

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- b. Transparency Dashboard: The Department shall compile and publish an annual report on its official public platform. The report shall be produced and managed by the UAS Program Coordinator using data aggregated from the UAS:
 1. Complete flight paths mapped over geographic imagery.
 2. Mission operational metrics, including precise flight duration, maximum altitude, and timestamps.
 3. Aircraft configuration information, including drone serial numbers and model identification.
 4. Core context records detailing the primary purpose of the flight and corresponding CAD or case report numbers.
 5. To safeguard public privacy rights and strictly adhere to data protection standards, raw video feeds and captured photographic imagery shall be completely excluded from the public transparency dashboard.
 6. Standard flight logs shall be finalized, approved, and updated on the public portal within seventy-two (72) hours of mission completion.
 7. Flights linked to active investigations, sensitive tactical operations, or confidential details may be manually withheld from immediate publication.
 8. Withheld logs must be re-evaluated and published upon case closure or once the tactical sensitivity of the operation has concluded.
- c. Public Records Requests: Department UAS records may be requested from the public in accordance with the Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA) in chapter 92F, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The Department shall comply with the provisions of the UIPA.

5.10 Administrative Review and Program Audit

- a. Review: The UAS Program Coordinator shall conduct a documented quarterly review of all DFR logs, CAD dispatch records, and flight

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paths to verify that every flight was tethered to a legitimate, authorized call for service.

- b. Audit: An annual written evaluation of the UAS program shall be prepared by the UAS Program Coordinator. This evaluation shall look at response times, program efficacy, community feedback, and total policy compliance for departmental review.

6.0 REFERENCES

6.1 Code of Federal Regulations

- a. 14 CFR Part 107
- b. 14 CFR Part 91

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