Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS)

220.1 PURPOSE

This Standard Operating Procedure establishes the operational guidelines for the deployment, operation, and management of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) by the San Mateo Police Department.

These procedures provide direction to authorized personnel regarding lawful, safe, and effective use of sUAS technology in support of law enforcement and public safety operations.

220.2 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS (CON OPS)

SMPD's Drone as a First Responder concept of operations approved by the FAA.

Night Operations:

Those operations that occur between the end of evening civil twilight and the beginning of morning civil twilight, as published in the American Air Almanac, converted to local time (this is equal to approximately 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise).

220.3 OPERATIONS

Authorized Operations

Only personnel trained and authorized by the Department may operate sUAS equipment.

sUAS deployments may be conducted for the following operational purposes:

- Post-incident crime scene documentation and evidence preservation
- Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) support operations
- Hazardous materials incident response
- Search and rescue operations
- Critical incidents including:
  - barricaded suspects
  - hostage situations
  - active shooters
  - tactical operations
- Apprehension of armed, dangerous, or violent fleeing suspects posing an imminent threat to public safety
- Disaster response and recovery operations
- Authorized training missions
- Public safety support during authorized events
- Fire response support at the request of local, state, or federal fire authorities

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- Operations conducted pursuant to a valid search warrant

All deployments shall comply with FAA regulations and Department operational guidelines.

PREFLIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Prior to each flight, the RPIC will evaluate the situation to determine the risks involved with the deployment of the UAS. The RPIC should weigh the risk of an UAS deployment against the benefit it may bring to the overall success of the mission. Prior to each flight, the RPIC will determine the airspace they will be operating within and make appropriate notifications.The RPIC will determine the weather conditions and ensure they do not exceed weather minimums for both day and night flight operations.

NIGHT OPERATIONS:

UAS night operations are authorized. For purposes of night flights, the following apply:

Additional training will be provided on the lighting configuration of the UAS to ensure proper recognition during night flight operations. The UAS must be equipped with anti-collision lighting visible from a distance of no less than 3 statute miles. In the interest of public safety, the RPIC may reduce or turn off the intensity of the lighting if he or she determines it is necessary.

WEATHER:

Before each deployment, UAS Flight Crewmembers will ensure that he/she gathers enough information to make themselves familiar with the weather situation existing throughout the area of deployment. UAS Flight Crew Members shall utilize FAA approved weather resources to obtain the latest and most current weather conditions.

220.4 TRAINING

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

All UAS will only be operated by Department personnel in accordance to the SMPD sUAS training plan, and who have been trained in the operation of the system, possess a current FAA Part 107 certificate with a UAS rating, and are authorized by the UAS Program Manager. All agency personnel with UAS responsibilities, including command officers, will be provided training in the rules governing UAS use.

RECURRENT TRAINING:

To maintain a level of proficiency, UAS Flight Crewmembers shall be required to attend regular training. Training will be coordinated through the UAS Program Manager or Supervisors.

All UAS Flight Crewmembers in the assignment shall maintain proficiency in their pilot/observer abilities.

Recurrent training is not limited to actual piloting/observer skills but includes knowledge of all pertinent UAS/aviation matters.

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Failure to demonstrate proficiency or follow department rules can result in removal from the UAS program.

TRAINING RECORDS:

All UAS Flight Crewmembers will have a training file on record that details training history. This training file will be held in conjunction with the member's normal training file per Department policy at the SMPD training unit. All deployments or exercises will be documented in a flight log and count towards a UAS Flight Crewmember's training.

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