

ESCAMBIA COUNTY FIRE-RESCUE

Standard Operating Guidelines

7100.015

Drone Operations

Implemented: 11/18/2022

Revised:

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Jason Catrambone, Fire Chief

PURPOSE:

To enhance firefighter and citizen safety by improving emergency response through the assessment and implementation of emerging technologies that can provide real time intelligence.

OBJECTIVE:

To provide direction and expectations for fire department drone pilots.

SCOPE:

All Personnel

Drone/Equipment:

Emergency Management's DJI Mavic 2 kit including Smart Controller. Personal drones are not covered by Escambia County FAA license and therefore not authorized for use.

RESPONSIBILITIES: All personnel who will use the UAV must be properly trained and have achieved technical proficiency in the utilization of the equipment prior to its use.

To the extent possible, trainings related to the UAV should include hands on scenario-based training, including the examination of circumstances in which the UAV should or should not be placed into service.

Pilots and crew members operating an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV or drone) will be trained and certified in the operation of the system.

It is incumbent on each member operating an unmanned aerial device to take reasonable precautions to protect the privacy of the businesses and residents in Escambia County and only utilize the intel collected by UAVs in a manner that assists in increasing the safety of the organization or the public.

Due consideration towards the privacy of individuals will be exercised during the decision to launch or not launch the UAV, however, minimizing imminent hazards to human life will take precedence. Privacy rights that may be affected include an individual's reasonable expectation of privacy in areas society recognizes as reasonable including the home and the curtilage around the home. Privacy rights may also exist in public areas where surveillance by traditional and non-aerial means would be unlikely or unfeasible.

The UAV is the property of Escambia County Fire Rescue and shall not be used for personal entertainment or for any activity that will distract personnel from their duties.

Unauthorized use of a UAV will result in strict accountability.



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DEFINITIONS:

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) An aircraft that is intended to navigate in the air without an onboard pilot. Also called Remote Piloted Aircraft, Robotic Aircraft, or drone.

Operators/Pilots Are those trained by the Emergency Management Coordinator. Anyone who has not received the training regardless of the knowledge or skillset outside of the organization is not authorized to operate.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Pilot in Command A person exercising control over an unmanned aerial vehicle during flight.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Flight Crewmember A pilot, visual observer, payload operator or other person assigned duties for a UAV for the purpose of flight.

Public Safety Mission A critical incident which poses an imminent threat of loss of life, property, or public health safety, or welfare, including but not limited to, structure fires, hazardous materials incidents, human-made or natural disasters, water rescue incidents, and fire investigation efforts.

Public Safety Efforts Acts that contribute directly to improving public safety outcomes in a non-emergency setting including preplanning inspections of hazardous materials sites or high-risk structures and conducting training scenarios. Public safety efforts do not include surveillance of residential areas or tracking of individuals or groups of people.

Pre-Flight:

UAVs will only be operated by personnel, both pilots and crew members, who have been trained in the operation of the system.

ECFR personnel may request UAV operation for a Public Safety Mission or to aid Public Safety Efforts. Other agencies and jurisdictions may also request ECFR operation of a UAV for a public safety mission.

During Flight:

The pilot in command will function as the team leader and the operator of the UAV and will be held ultimately responsible for the safe operation of the device.

Current Parameters:

Flight Plan

All drones must operate below the altitude of 200' until further notice.

All drones must remain in the line of sight until further notice.

Use is not permitted in wind speed above 30 miles per hour.

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Standing Parameters:

Operations:

No pictures are to be taken.

No videos are to be taken.

Care should be taken during all drone operations. Repairs resulting from any damage will be at the responsibility of the Fire Department, not Emergency Management. General maintenance and the replacement of worn parts will be the responsibility of Emergency Management.

The observer will maintain visual observation of the UAV while it is in flight and alert the pilot in command of any conditions (obstructions, terrain, structures, air traffic, weather, etc.) which affect the safety of the flight. To accomplish this, the observer must remain near the pilot in command to ensure instant relaying of information.

UAV team members will comply with all policies and standard operating guidelines always unless an emergency dictates otherwise.