



## LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

**NUMBER:** 2165  
**TOPIC:** UNMANNED AIRCRAFT  
**ISSUED BY:** TERESA EWINS, CHIEF OF POLICE  
**DATE:** 1-1-2022  
**SUPERSEDES:** 1-1-2019  
**REFERENCE:**

### I. POLICY

The Lincoln Police Department small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) program is designed to directly assist the three divisions of the department in the prevention of crime, the apprehension of criminals, the preservation of public peace, and to protect the personal and property rights of the community of Lincoln, Nebraska. The Lincoln Police Department will operate the aircraft with specific mission goals in mind, not random surveillance, and will follow all legal requirements for obtaining information that may have evidentiary value. All operational procedures set forth in this policy will comply with all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, Nebraska state statutes, and Lincoln Municipal Code, City of Lincoln Administrative Regulations, and rules and regulations.

### II. PROCEDURE

#### A. Definitions

1. sUAS - Small unmanned aircraft and its associated elements, including communication links, weighing less than 55 lbs. including payload that can be flown without the possibility of direct human intervention.
2. Pilot in Command (PIC) - The person who has the final authority and responsibility for the operation and safety of the flight, has been designated as PIC before or during the flight, and holds the appropriate category, class, and type rating to operate sUAS.
3. Observer - A person trained to assist a sUAS pilot in the duties of collision avoidance and navigational awareness through electronic or visual means. Collision avoidance includes, but is not limited to, avoidance of other traffic, clouds, obstructions, terrain, and navigational awareness.
4. Program Coordinator -The Chief of Police will appoint a program coordinator who will be responsible for the management of the sUAS program.

5. Certificate of Authorization (COA) - COA is an authorization issued by the Air Traffic Organization to a public operator for a specific sUAS. Provisions or limitations may be listed during the approval process.
6. Notice to Airman (NOTAM) - A notice containing information concerning the establishment, condition, or change in any component (facility, service, or procedure of, or hazard in the National Airspace System), the timely knowledge of which is essential to personnel concerned with flight operations. Flight information to create a NOTAM can be provided to the agency by telephone at 1-800-992-7433 or online at [www.1800wxbrief.com](http://www.1800wxbrief.com).
7. Critical Incident – Violent or potentially violent incidents where the safety of the public and officers are jeopardized. sUAS would provide situational awareness without compromising officer safety.
8. Certificate of Waiver - Special permission the FAA issues to authorize certain types of UAS operations not covered under the Part 107 rules.

#### B. Program Coordinator

The program coordinator will be responsible for the following actions:

1. Ensure all policies and procedures for sUAS are in conformance with current laws, rules and regulations, and best practices.
2. Monitor that the Certificate of Authorization (COA) and/or Certificate of Waiver on file with the FAA are current.
3. Track that all pilots in command have completed required FAA and department required training before operating sUAS.
4. Ensure that the pilot in command follows all applicable laws, policies and procedures, and rules and regulations regarding use of sUAS, including any limits of the Certificate of Authorization and/or Certificate of Waiver.
5. Review all requests to deploy sUAS, which may also be done by a designee, including urgent requests made during ongoing or

emerging incidents, and then contact the Chief of Police or designee for authorization to deploy sUAS. The Chief of Police or designee shall be the final authority for deployment of sUAS.

6. Maintain all inspection, maintenance and records on the sUAS.
7. Provide adequate, current information about sUAS in operation and any other information requested to the City's Risk Management Division for liability coverage.
8. Provide for public information and education on a sUAS and its use by the department.
9. Provide an annual report to the Mayor describing of sUAS operations, including a categorical list of authorized operations, dates, approximate length of deployment, and outcomes.

#### C. Authorized Operations

The sUAS will only be used in the following situations:

1. Critical Incidents.
2. Vehicular crash reconstruction.
3. Search and rescue operations (separate from criminal investigation).
4. Crime Scene photography, videography, and documentation.
5. Mapping, modeling, and/or inspecting critical infrastructure.
6. Pre-event mapping for security planning of large-scale public events.
7. Training.
8. Operations as authorized through by court order.
9. Interdepartmental assistance.

#### D. Privacy

At all times individual privacy rights shall be respected, with an understanding of an individual's reasonable expectation of privacy. Pilots in command and observers will follow all federal and state laws, municipal ordinances, rules and regulations, policies and procedures, and adhere to case law when using sUAS. For those operations that could implicate privacy concerns, the department may seek the advice of the City Law Department and provide notice of potential claims.

#### E. Derivative Use

sUAS data not associated with an authorized operation may not be used unless it is for the purpose of a criminal investigation.

#### F. Pilots

1. Only trained and approved pilots in command will be allowed to operate the sUAS.
2. Each pilot in command will maintain a flight logbook tracking their sUAS operations, including date of flight, length of flight, purpose of operation, permissions obtained, observers and others present, and outcomes from the operation.
3. Before flying a sUAS, the pilot in command must obtain a weather briefing and, if necessary, enter a Notice to Airman (NOTAM) and notify air traffic control of the flight.
4. No changes to the sUAS software is allowed without approval of the Program Coordinator or a designee.
5. If possible, no mission should take place without an observer.
6. The pilot in command shall follow all applicable laws, policies and procedures, and rules and regulations for operations with sUAS, including any limits of the Certificate of Authorization.
7. At all times, the sUAS must be kept within line of sight of the pilot in command and /or the observer.
8. No weapons are allowed on the sUAS.

#### G. Accident Reporting

1. All accidents involving a sUAS must be reported to the department on a Damaged/Lost Equipment form.
2. Accidents must be reported to the FAA within 10 calendar days if any operation of sUAS involving at least:
  - a. There is serious injury to any person or anytime a person loses consciousness because of contact with a sUAS.
  - b. Damage to any property, other than the sUAS, unless:
    1. The cost of repair, including materials and labor does not exceed \$500.00, or
    2. The fair market value of the property does not exceed \$500 in the event of a total loss.