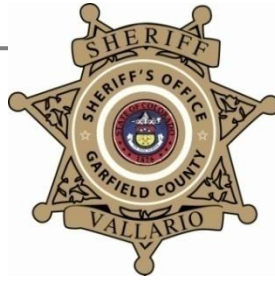


# SHERIFF OF GARFIELD COUNTY

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### GARFIELD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE POLICY / PROCEDURE PATROL

#### **SUBJECT: UNMANNED AIRCRAFT PROGRAM**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 01, 2024

#### **POLICY:**

The Garfield County Sheriff's Office Unmanned Aircraft Systems Unit shall support department operations by providing aerial observation of law enforcement and other public safety incidents. Missions will be accomplished efficiently and safely while respecting the law and the privacy of the citizens we serve.

This policy is not intended to be all-inclusive, but a supplement to other UAS guidelines, Federal Aviation Regulations, all other applicable Sheriff's Office policies, aircraft manufacturers' approved flight manual, etc.

#### **PURPOSE:**

To promote the safe and efficient operation of the Agencies unmanned aircraft. Safety, above all else, is the primary concern in each and every operation, regardless of the nature of the mission.

#### **METHOD:**

##### **GCSO UAS Operations**

- GCSO UAS devices may only be utilized under the following circumstances:
  - To assist in search and rescue operations.
  - To provide aerial documentation of crime scenes.
  - To provide aerial surveillance of damage caused by natural or manmade events.
  - To provide visual perspective to GCSO personnel to aid in managing public safety operations.
  - To provide aerial, visual support – including images – of public safety operations as requested.
  - To provide aerial images in areas considered hazardous for human life (e.g. Hazmat incidents).
  - To assist Special Events Team or other GCSO personnel with aerial assessments of crowd situations (to aid in identifying safety issues).
  - To provide support for tactical operations.
  - For training, testing, evaluation, demonstration or maintenance purposes.
  - Assisting other county agencies as needed
  - Other circumstances as approved by the Sheriff or his/her designee.

Absent a valid search warrant, no UAS will be used to gather evidence or other information from or at a place where an individual has a reasonable expectation of privacy. This restriction does not apply to the following circumstances:

- UAS deployment in a public place;
- During an active search and rescue operation;
- To locate an escaped prisoner;
- To surveil a place or location for the purpose of executing an arrest warrant;
- If reasonable suspicion exists that UAS use is necessary to prevent imminent danger to an individual or to prevent the imminent destruction of evidence.

GCSO UAS systems shall **not** be used:

- To conduct random surveillance activities.
- To target any person based solely on individual characteristics, such as, but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation.
- To harass, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual or group.
- Over any correctional institution.
- With any type of weapon attached or affixed.

UAS will be operated within the current guidelines of the FAA, GCSO, and any existing Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) conditions. Only authorized operators who have been designated by the UAS Program Coordinator shall be permitted to operate the UAS, and only under the direct supervision of a remote pilot-in-command (PIC), if they are not certified. Any time a UAS is deployed for an operation including training, or maintenance the operation will be documented appropriately.

The Sheriff will designate a UAS Program Coordinator who will be responsible for UAS operations. The program coordinator will ensure policies and procedures conform to current laws, regulations and best practices, and will have the following additional responsibilities:

- Coordinating the applications for Remote Pilot Airman Certificates and ensuring that rating is current prior to allowing the certificate holder to act as remote pilot-in-command (PIC) of the UAS.
- Coordinating any additional applications for Certificate of Authorization or Waiver (COA), and ensuring those COAs are current.
- Ensuring that all crew members (PIC, Visual Observer, Safety Officers, and Communications Officers) have completed any required training relevant to their position.
- Developing and maintaining operation protocols governing the deployment and operation of the UAS, including, but not limited to, use of visual observers, establishment of lost link procedures, and documenting all missions.
- Developing UAS maintenance, inspection, and record keeping protocol to ensure continued airworthiness of a UAS up to and including its overhaul or life limits.
- Recommending program enhancement, particularly regarding safety and information security.
- Maintaining a log of all UAS deployments and completing an annual report summarizing UAS use.
- Ensuring established protocols are followed by monitoring and providing periodic reports on the program to the Sheriff or his/her designee.
- Developing minimum training and evaluation requirements for crew members for the purpose of maintaining skills and proficiency in operation, and maintain records of that training.

A UAS may be deployed pursuant to a mutual-aid request with the approval of the Sheriff, program coordinator or designee. UAS deployment for mutual-aid requests will be in accordance with department training and this policy.

**Retention of Data**

Data collected through UAS deployments, including evidentiary still and motion images, shall be stored and retained in accordance with GCSO records retention schedules. Copies of files may also be saved for training purposes.

**Training**

All personnel authorized to act as a UAS crew member shall receive appropriate training as directed by the Program Coordinator. That training shall, at a minimum, meet the requirements set forth by the FAA, and may be periodically adjusted to reflect operational needs and the latest safety information.

Pilots will document each use of the UAS in an electronic flight log, as available.

Once a year all remote pilot in commands (PIC's) will successfully complete the NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) approved BPERP (Basic Proficiency Evaluation for Remote Pilots) certification

**Accident reporting and Emergency Procedure**

Any unmanned aircraft event that causes injury to public or personnel, damage to equipment or private property will be reported through the management structure of the Unmanned Aircraft Program. Should injury occur appropriate medical care will be the first priority.

FAA mandated procedures will also be followed.