



WEST SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (UAS)

FAQs

What is a drone or UAS?

UAS is an Unmanned Aircraft System or Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) and is commonly called a drone. A drone is an aerial device with an onboard computer that is operated remotely, generally by a pilot on the ground using a handheld controller. Small drones are battery operated, weigh less than 55 pounds, have several rotors like a helicopter, and are equipped with a video camera.

Where is the video and photos taken by the UAS stored?

Upon completion of each sUAS mission the recorded data shall be reviewed and evaluated for evidentiary value. Data of identifiable individuals captured during a sUAS mission shall not be retained unless there is reasonable suspicion that evidence of criminal activity is present. All retained data shall be maintained or destroyed pursuant to department records retention and evidence policies and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Who has access to the video and photos?

Video and photos that are collected by UAS are stored for the purposes of conducting police investigation and subsequent prosecutions. Accordingly, videos and photos are generally accessible to police investigators for official use only. Like all police records, video and photos may also be subject to additional release under the same rules and restrictions as Body Worn Camera (BWC) Video and other items of evidence. Generally, UAS photos and video are considered part of the investigative record and are not available to the public under the California Public Records Act (CPRA) or Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

How is my privacy protected?

The West Sacramento Police Department UAS Commanders, operators and observers will consider the protection of individual civil rights and the reasonable expectation of privacy as a key component of any decision made to deploy the UAS. Each UAS operator and observer will ensure that operations of the UAS are consistent with local, state, and federal law. Reasonable precautions can include, for example, deactivating or turning imaging devices away from such areas or persons during UAS operations.

What training do UAS pilots undergo?

In addition to the training and study required to maintain a FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot License, all West Sacramento Police UAS Team members train regularly in a variety of locations and settings to ensure operational efficiency. All training is documented, and the records are maintained by the West

Sacramento Police Department and are subject to review by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

What rules and regulations must West Sacramento Police UAS pilots follow?

All West Sacramento Police UAS pilots are subject to FAA regulations related to airspace use, and all must have a valid "Part 107" Remote Pilot License or be operating under the direct control of a Remote Pilot in Command. UAS Pilots are also subject to the Certificates of Authorizations (COA) issued to the West Sacramento Police Department by the Federal Aviation Administration as well as West Sacramento Police Department Policy on UAS Operations, Policy 473. A copy of this policy is available on the department web page.

Why does the West Sacramento Police Department use UAS rather than helicopters?

Helicopters and other manned aircraft (air support) are very expensive to operate. Currently, The West Sacramento Police Department relies on the Sacramento Police Department, Sacramento Sheriff's Office, and the California Highway Patrol for air support. UAS can be used in a variety of ways that supplement mutual aid air support requests in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Who authorizes the use and deployment of the UAS?

The UAS Program Supervisor (Sergeant) or UAS Program Manager (Lieutenant) authorizes the use and deployment of the UAS. In emergency or exigent situations, the on-duty Watch Commander can authorize the deployment of a UAS.

How do I ask a question or make a complaint about UAS use in West Sacramento?

Anyone may email the UAS Manager, Lieutenant Jason Winger at jasonw@cityofwestsacramento.org to ask questions about the program and use. Also, anyone who wishes to make a complaint may contact the West Sacramento Police Department in person or may contact our dispatch center at (916) 372-3375 to speak with the on-duty supervisor.