



City of Bellevue

UAS POLICY

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The City of Bellevue (“City”) is dedicated to, and has built into its long-term strategic vision, embracing technologies that help improve its services while protecting the privacy and safety of its residents. The use of unmanned aerial systems (“UAS”) technology in the public interest is expected to benefit residents and visitors through more efficient use of City resources and public safety services. The term UAS means an unmanned aircraft flown by a pilot via a ground control system or autonomously through use of an on-board computer, communication links or other additional equipment.

This UAS Policy (“Policy”) is intended to guide City officials, employees and outside contractors working on behalf of departments with approved UAS programs or initiatives.

POLICY STATEMENT

Unmanned aerial systems can support clear communication to the public, enhance public safety, conserve City resources and increase efficiency. The City Manager or designee, is authorized to approve policies for the safe operation of unmanned aerial systems by the City of Bellevue in accordance with Federal, State and City regulations.

The City’s UAS Policy requires each participating department to adhere to uniform operational guidelines and develop specific operating procedures. Departments may add requirements to their UAS guidelines that are consistent with or more stringent than the requirements in this Policy but may not remove any requirement in this document.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

- *Personal Identifiable Information*: Information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual’s identity, either alone or combined with other personal information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual.
- *Unmanned Aerial System (UAS)*: A system that includes the necessary equipment, network and personnel to control an unmanned aircraft, and all the supporting or attached systems designed for gathering information through imaging, recording or any other means.
- *UAS Aircraft Pilot/Operator*: A person exercising control over a UAS during flight.

POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The privacy and safety of Bellevue residents, businesses and visitors are the top priority of this Policy. Department policies and guidelines must be consistent with this Policy and must comply with all City, State and Federal laws and regulations, and with all state and federal Constitutional guarantees. This includes all Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) requirements for the registration and use of UAS by the City.

AUTHORIZED USE

Department directors are authorized to review and approve new UAS uses that are in accordance with applicable Federal and State regulations and consistent with City policies and operating procedures.

PRIVACY

Protecting public privacy is of utmost concern to the City. Departments must have an authorized purpose to collect data using a UAS. Absent a warrant or exigent circumstances, UAS operators and observers shall not intentionally record or transmit images of any location where a person would have a reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g. inside a house or fenced yard). Operators and observers shall take reasonable precautions to avoid inadvertently recording or transmitting images of areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

DATA SECURITY AND RETENTION

All data shall be handled in accordance with existing policy on records retention. Data shall be securely stored in a city approved repository and in accordance with City public records policy and State public records laws and retained no longer than necessary.

SAFETY

UAS must be operated in a safe manner. City UAS should not be operated in a way that could foreseeably cause personal injury or property damage and may not be operated in violation of FAA rules.

OPERATORS

All City personnel and contractors working on behalf of the City with UAS responsibilities shall be trained in City, State and Federal laws and regulations, as well as policies and procedures governing the deployment and use of UAS. The departmental UAS policy and guidelines must be reviewed and signed by all UAS aircraft pilots and flight crewmembers, and any individuals with access to collected data that may contain personal identifiable information.

City personnel must complete a department-approved training program to ensure proper use and operations. Additional training may be required at periodic intervals to ensure the continued effective use, operation and performance of equipment and to incorporate changes, updates or other revisions in policy and equipment.

Engaging in unauthorized use of City UAS may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment, as well as to applicable monetary fines and penalties. Nothing in this Policy shall modify or reduce any due process rights provided pursuant to the officer or employee's collective bargaining agreement.