

# REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM

## 1. GENERAL

- A. Halifax Regional Police is committed to using technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations in serving the community. Remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) are power-driven aircraft designed to fly without a human operator on board.
- B. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the use of the RPAS is managed in an efficient and accountable manner consistent with law, policy and best practices.
- C. Deployments of this technology will be in direct support of emergency events, crime scene and vehicular collisions forensics collection, tactical operations, officer training, disaster response and any other mission requiring aerial support.

## 2. POLICY

- D. The RPAS shall be operated in a consistent manner within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Accordingly, Section 8 protects citizens from unreasonable searches and seizures.
- E. RPAS shall only be deployed in connection with properly authorized investigations and emergency response activities. It shall only be deployed within the context of existing and applicable federal and local laws/regulations and agency safeguards.
- F. RPAS operations will only be conducted by authorized RPAS operators who have completed the required training and certification, and be conducted in a safe manner, at the discretion of the operator.
- G. All requests for RPAS services require approval of the Inspector of Specialized Support, Divisional Commander or Duty Officer.
- H. If the RPAS Operator feels it is not safe to operate the RPAS, they have the absolute discretion regarding flight.
- I. The RPAS will be operated in accordance with manufacturer specifications and will not be weaponized.
- J. The Inspector in charge of Specialized Support will designate a RPAS Administrator.

**REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM (RPAS) GUIDELINES**

- K. HRP is dedicated to highly professional RPAS flight operations, with safety as the first priority in all RPAS deployments.
- L. Operational RPAS flights can be of assistance in the following situations:
- i. To obtain digital aerial images and video for the purpose of investigating a major traffic collision involving serious injury or death;
  - ii. To record critical infrastructure for the purpose of Incident Response and Major Incident management;
  - iii. To assist with locating wanted or outstanding parties;
  - iv. To assist the Emergency Response Team (ERT) with additional capabilities i.e. barricaded parties, search warrant execution;
  - v. To provide additional public and officer safety by providing visual assistance for Patrol and specialized units;
  - vi. To provide intelligence support, surveillance and reconnaissance to Investigative areas;
  - vii. To search buildings or enclosed areas for victims or suspects;
  - viii. To assist with locating lost or stolen property including evidence;
  - ix. To examine crime scenes;
  - x. To view outdoor industrial accidents/fire examination/major incidents;
  - xi. To assist with search and rescue or search and recovery efforts (missing or vulnerable persons searches);
  - xii. To train RPAS Operators; and,
  - xiii. Other incidents where the Superintendent of Specialized Support or designate deems it necessary.

**IMAGE COLLECTION GUIDELINES**

- M. Operation of the RPAS shall be conducted in a manner that complies with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, with consideration for reasonable expectation of privacy.
- N. Any search conducted using the RPAS must be authorized by law and Transport Canada guidelines.
- O. Video and/or photographic images captured with the RPAS shall be obtained in such a manner that complies with privacy legislation. Every effort shall be made to avoid the capture of images of bystanders to the operation, including consideration of when the zoom capability is utilized.
- P. The RPAS Operator shall ensure that original data of an evidentiary nature shall be kept in accordance with but not limited to HRP directives dealing with records and information management systems and records retention, storage and disposition.

**DISCLOSURE GUIDELINES**

- Q. Recordings will only be disclosed as authorized by law. External requests for digital footage or images shall be processed through the HRP Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy office.
- R. Where a capture of bystander images unintentionally occurs, recordings shall be edited by blurring or removal before any disclosure is made
- S. Any disclosure of recordings other than for Court purposes, shall be of a working copy, edited for privacy as necessary.

**3. PROCEDURE****REQUESTING RPAS DEPLOYMENT**

- Q. Requests for deployment of the RPAS can be made by contacting the Inspector of Specialized Support or designate through the Duty Officer.
- R. All RPAS calls for service shall be reviewed by the Inspector of Specialized Support or designate and evaluated on a case by case basis. The following concerns shall be considered:
  - i. Current weather conditions;
  - ii. Location and/or circumstances of the requested flight;
  - iii. Capabilities of the RPAS;
  - iv. Compliance with Federal and Provincial statutes; and,
  - v. Consideration of privacy concerns.

**RPAS ADMINISTRATOR**

- S. The RPAS Administrator will be responsible for:
  - i. Ensuring documentation of maintenance and flight logs;
  - ii. Coordinate training for RPAS Operators;
  - iii. Ensure Operators are certified and maintain their certification as per Transport Canada regulations; and,
  - iv. Coordinate inspections and repairs to ensure drone is fully operational.

**RPAS OPERATORS**

- T. RPAS Operators shall be responsible for:
  - i. Complying with Transport Canada and the Canadian Aviation Regulations.
  - ii. Operating the RPAS in a safe and responsible manner at all times;

- iii. When operating an RPAS, clearly informing the Visual Observer/Spotter of their role and responsibilities;
- iv. Utilizing the RPAS and associated equipment within its capabilities;
- v. Ensuring that WIFI is turned off or Local Data Mode is engaged during flight in order protect against any unauthorized access;
- vi. Completing pre and post flight inspections, calibrations and safety checks;
- vii. Reporting any operational or equipment concerns to the Inspector or Superintendent of Specialized Support;
- viii. Guarding against the risk of a failed flight, ceasing an operation if a low battery or other warning indicator is present;
- ix. Notifying the Watch Commander and the Inspector of Specialized Support, as soon as practical, if the RPAS is involved in an accident or incident including a failed flight in need of recovery; and,
- x. Completing their officer notes; and,
- xi. Maintaining a log of usage/circumstances of use.

#### **VISUAL OBSERVER/SPOTTER**

- U. The Visual Observer/Spotter shall be responsible for:
  - i. Assisting the RPAS operator with collision avoidance by continuously monitoring the surroundings of the RPAS for air traffic, obstructions and terrain; and,
  - ii. Ensuring the RPAS operator is not interrupted during operation by police personnel and spectators.
  - iii. Assisting in the recovery of the UAV in the event of a failed flight and ensuring the recovered UAV is turned over to the RPAS Operator

#### **4. DEFINITIONS**

- A. **RPAS** – the acronym for Remotely Piloted Aircraft System. RPAS is a vehicle that is power driven, other than a model aircraft, that is designed to fly without an onboard operator(s).
- B. **RPAS Operator** – refers to an RPAS operator who holds a valid Pilot Certificate issued by Transport Canada.
- C. **Observer** – a trained person who is in direct communication with the operator and continually maintaining visual line of sight with the RPAS, (for example, other traffic, clouds, obstructions and terrain).

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| <b>Effective Date of Last Revision</b> | February 8, 2024 |
| <b>Policy Owner</b>                    | Chief of Police  |

**By Order Of:**



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**Chief Don MacLean**  
Chief of Police

