

COVID-19 UAS GUIDANCE - UTILIZING DRONES FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING

This document provides interim policy for the employment of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), otherwise known as drones during this period of social distancing as a precaution for COVID-19.

The use of drones is encouraged where mission efficiencies clearly warrant their employment, and as a means to facilitate social distancing to enhance personnel safety.

Overview

The primary goal in the utilization of UAS as a means to facilitate COVID-19 social distancing is the protection of PennDOT employees, contractors, consultants, and their families.

The intent of this guidance is to assure: full compliance with current Federal and State guidelines and standards; flight coordination with all appropriate parties; and PennDOT's visibility and oversight of all UAS flights. It will serve as UAS Usage for Construction Inspection Policy, Usage for Design Related Activities including Surveying and Bridge Inspection, Maintenance activities including Incident Management and Traffic Operations; and other miscellaneous uses identified by the UAS Steering Committee.

Guidance

PennDOT Employees

PennDOT UAS operators will follow the below listed operational guidelines and precautions during the COVID-19 emergency:

- PennDOT UAS operators must be FAA Part 107 certified, and receive initial operator training by the Bureau of Aviation on PennDOT's draft UAS Policy and flight expectations. Pilot proficiency on equipment will be validated by the District/Bureau.
- All UAS flights will be pre-approved by a UAS Coordinator by using PennDOT's Flight Request Form (AV-14), and will include considerations for social distancing of all participating individuals.
- District Offices and Bureaus will identify a Point of Contact (POC). The POC will coordinate with available UAS Coordinators for approval of AV-14's as follows;

D1, D2, and D3 – Mr. Jeff Hummer (District 1) –
814-678-7122, jehummer@pa.gov

D4, D5, and D6 – Mr. John Melville (Bureau of Aviation) –
717-705-1239, jmelville@pa.gov

D8, D9, and Hwy Admin Central Office – Mr. Steven Moore (Project Delivery) –
717-425-5944, stepmoore@pa.gov

D10, D11 and D12 – Mr. Kevin Lira (District 11) –
412-429-4918, klira@pa.gov

- UAS Coordinators will receive remote training by the Bureau of Aviation on reviewing Flight Request Forms and managing program requirements.
- Mission Assistants may be waived by District/Bureau UAS Coordinators for social distancing on low risk missions where the likelihood of landing area disruption, or pilot distraction, is not expected.
- All missions will be flown in compliance with FAA Part 107 guidelines. Operational needs that require FAA waiver to Part 107 will be coordinated through the Bureau of Aviation.
- UAS operators are expected to coordinate their flights with any airport or heliport located within one (1) mile of their mission.

Contractors and Consultants

Contractor and Consultant UAS operators will follow the below listed operational guidelines and precautions during the COVID-19 emergency:

- All UAS operators flying missions on PennDOT Projects must be FAA Part 107 certified, and receive initial operator training by the Bureau of Aviation on PennDOT's draft Publication 832 UAS Policy and flight expectations.
- All UAS flights requested by the Department will be pre-approved by the Pilot's respective supervisor using PennDOT's Flight Request Form (AV-14), and will include considerations for social distancing of all participating individuals. UAS missions determined to be high risk must be pre-coordinated with the District Office and respective PennDOT UAS Coordinator identified above. Copies of the AV-14 will be forwarded to the respective District Office for review and inclusion into the project files.
- UAS flights by contractors/consultants not specifically requested by PennDOT must be pre-coordinated with the PennDOT District Office.
- Consultants flying PennDOT construction projects must notify the prime contractor of their intended missions.

- Use of Mission Assistants and Visual Observers are recommended, as necessary, however social distancing and personal protective precautions must be considered in their use. They may not be necessary due to social distancing on low risk missions where the likelihood of landing area disruption, or pilot distraction, is not expected.
- UAS operators are expected to coordinate their flights with any airport or heliport located within one (1) mile of their mission.
- Third Party UAS operators must comply with all indemnification and insurance requirements found in the most current version of PennDOT's Publications 93 and 442, Chapters 5.9 and 3.1 respectively.
- District Office UAS Points of Contact (POC) are:
 - District 1 – Jeff Hummer, 814-678-7122, jehummer@pa.gov
 - District 2 – Greg Caldwell, 814-371-3261, grcaldwell@pa.gov
 - District 3 – Michael Mausteller, 570-368-4390, mmaustelle@pa.gov
 - Back-up – Gerald Wertz, 570-368-4372, gwertz@pa.gov
 - District 4 – Mike Walsh, 570-963-4103, michaelwals@pa.gov
 - District 5 – Jason Steigerwalt, 610-871-4591, jsteigerwa@pa.gov
 - District 6 – Brian Early, 610-205-6681, bearly@pa.gov
 - District 8 – Dan Rocuskie, 717-705-6181, docuskie@pa.gov
 - District 9 – Doug Eckard, 814-696-7212, deckard@pa.gov
 - District 10 – Terrence Kerr, 724-357-2949, tkerr@pa.gov
 - District 11 – Kevin Lira, 412-429-4918, klira@pa.gov
 - District 12 – Eric Wanson, 724-439-7338, ewanson@pa.gov