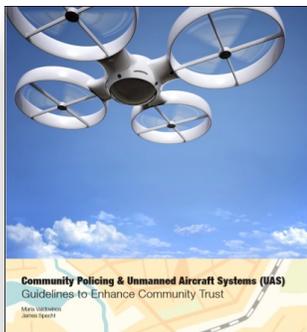


5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (sUAS) IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Technology is rapidly changing the face of policing today. One new technology is the small-unmanned aircraft system (sUAS), a portable and easy to learn technology of increasing interest to law enforcement because of its potential to improve operational efficiency as well as officer and community safety.

However, there is concern about the potential for an invasion of privacy. While the sUAS can provide immeasurable benefits, it also has the potential to drive a wedge between police and the community.

To avoid these risks law enforcement agencies considering adopting a sUAS should engage their communities in the decision to implement a program.



For more information on sUASs in law enforcement see the Police Foundation's "Community Policing & Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS): Guidelines to Enhance Community Trust" guidebook funded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice & The National Public Safety sUAS Flight Operations and Incident Reporting System, funded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.



1



UNDERSTAND THE TECHNOLOGY AND CONCERNS ABOUT ITS USE

Law enforcement agencies considering deploying sUAS must UNDERSTAND the technology, the benefits to public and officer safety, the legal limitations on its use, the regulatory environment in which it will operate, privacy laws and expectations, and other critical issues. Some of the most important considerations are the needs, fears and concerns of the community regarding potential police surveillance of citizens.

2



EMBRACE THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMMUNITY POLICING WHEN ADOPTING NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Community policing embodies trust and mutual respect between police and the communities they serve as critical to public safety. It promotes organizational strategies that support the systemic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime. When considering implementation of new, potentially controversial technology, it is important for police departments to rely on these practices, and engage the community in the process of deciding whether to implement or not.

3



PROPERLY DEVELOPED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ARE ESSENTIAL TO BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL sUAS PROGRAM

As with implementation of any new technology, developing and vetting detailed sUAS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES is critical. Departmental sUAS policy should clearly define how personnel are permitted to use sUAS technology, allay public fears of loss of privacy, assure legal and ethical use of the technology, and provide a vehicle for accountability. Share the draft of the policies and procedures with the community and accept their input where appropriate.

4



ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN CONVERSATION REGARDING sUAS PROGRAM PLANNING, INCLUDING ADDRESSING PRIVACY AND OTHER CONCERNS

A community ENGAGEMENT plan should be one of the first and most important elements of sUAS program development. Create opportunities to gain input from the community and explain how you will protect privacy and maintain safety. Partnerships with the media are a beneficial strategy for raising public awareness of the sUAS program. Unwavering transparency, collaboration, proactive continued engagement, outreach, and trust are essential to community understanding, acceptance and support.

5



MEASURES FOR ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY ARE KEY FOR ANY sUAS PROGRAM

ACCOUNTABILITY will assure your community that your department will use sUAS in accordance with properly developed policies and procedures and is essential to obtaining and maintaining community support. The community must have confidence that complaints, or audits that reveal possible violations are thoroughly investigated and misuse is addressed. Accountability must be ensured at all levels, including sworn and civilian employees, contractors, subcontractors, and volunteers.