



POLICY MANUAL

Section:	(To be obtained from Administration)	Approved: _____
Policy No.:	(To be obtained from Administration)	Chair
Originating Dept.:	Office of Emergency Management	_____
Subject:	Unmanned Aerial System Program	Vice Chair
Effective Date:	Date policy is approved by the BOCC.	_____
Replaces:	New	Commissioner

I. **Purpose:**

The purpose of the La Plata County Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) is to support and augment County operations through improved efficiency with aerial equipment and create new opportunities to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the public and County staff. This UAS Policy and associated procedures are intended to ensure the safe and responsible operation of the County's unmanned aircraft, regardless of the nature of the mission.

II. **Policy Statement:**

Unmanned Aerial Systems provide La Plata County with the ability to safely and cost-effectively augment government services, improve efficiency of various tasks and improve the safety of the public and emergency responders. We believe it prudent to maintain personnel trained in the use of unmanned aircraft systems and to use this resource to protect life and property and to support County departments in providing services to La Plata County citizens. County staff are authorized to utilize the UAS and associated technologies, in furtherance of county business to supplement, improve and expedite emergency management, search & rescue activities, law enforcement, , mapping and measuring, improving situational awareness, conducting damage assessments, and to perform any other task made more safe and cost-effective through the UAS. Safety and privacy concerns are priorities in the implementation of the program.

This policy is not intended to be all-inclusive, but a supplement to other UAS guidelines, Federal Aviation Regulations, all other applicable County policies and procedures, as well as aircraft manufacturers' approved flight manuals, etc. Operational guidelines and procedures will be developed through the UAS Program and the UAS Program Team.

III. **Definitions:**

AGL: Above Ground Level.

COA: Certificate of Waiver or Authorization issued by the FAA granting permission of the requesting agency operating as public aircraft for a specific UAS activity.

FAA: Federal Aviation Administration.

FARs: Federal Aviation Regulations. For the purpose of conducting civil sUAS operations this is generally 14 CFR Part 107 and Advisory Circular 107-2.

GCS: Ground Control System – System of personnel and equipment which controls the UAV flight operation, and sends and receives data or media during a UAS Mission.

Colorado Mob Plan: State of Colorado Emergency Operations Plan All-Hazards Resource Mobilization Annex. This gives guidelines to allow sharing of response equipment and personnel between State and local governments in CO.

Non-Participant: A person not involved in the event or operation, however in the area of or directly affected by the UAS flight or operation such as members of the media or by-standers.

(s)UAS: (Small) Unmanned Aircraft System [14 CFR Part 107] – UAV, GCS, flight cameras, data and media collection systems. A sUAS is greater than .55lbs and less than 55lbs in flight.

UAS Flight Team: The group of individuals responsible for the implementation of any UAS Mission authorized by this policy. This includes at minimum one UAV PIC. This may also include UAV Observers, UAV PMC, and UAS Equipment Operator(s).

UAS Mission: A Flight operation performed by a UAV including planning, pre-flight operations, deployment, operation of the UAV and post-flight operations.

UAS Equipment Operator: Person participating in UAS Mission responsible for operation of any ground-based equipment supporting the UAV apart from flight controls.

UAS Program Manager: Person Designated by La Plata County Director of Emergency Preparedness, with the concurrence of the County Manager and Sheriff, to implement UAS Program.

UAS Program Team: The in-house La Plata County team that consists of the UAS Program Manager and all UAS Project Coordinators.

UAS Project: A standard operating guideline developed by a Project Coordinator and vetted by UAS Program Team for implementation of UAS for a departmental task.

UAS (Departmental) Project Coordinator: Person designated by a Department Head or Elected Official to participate in UAS Program Team and implement UAS Program for their department.

UAS Participant: A person participating in an event under County operations or under an Incident Command System with an ongoing UAS Mission. This includes persons being the object of the operation, such as a person in need of rescue.

UAV: Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (a.k.a. Drone).

UAV (Visual) Observer: Visual Observer – Person acting as safety officer in direct contact with UAV PIC and UAV PMC during UAS mission responsible for relaying observations and hazards to the UAV PMC and to maintain situational awareness of GCS environment and UAV flight environment.

UAV (Remote) PIC: Pilot in Command – UAV Pilot remotely in control of a County UAV and is the final authority over UAV operations during a UAS Mission; provided, that all missions will be conducted in accordance with approved Project guidelines and parameters. A UAV PIC must be in control or able to immediately take manual control of a UAV in flight at all times and must be certified under La Plata County UAS Program to be a PIC for UAS Missions and hold a valid FAA Remote Pilot Certification with a sUAS rating.

UAV (Remote) PMC: Person Manipulating Controls – Person certified through La Plata County UAS Program to operate a UAV in flight during a UAS Mission. The PMC must have a valid FAA Remote Pilot Certification with a sUAS rating or be under the direct supervision of a PIC who has the ability to immediately take manual control a UAV in flight at all times.

IV. Applicability:

This policy applies to all County departments and offices that utilize the County's UAS. The UAS will only be operated by County employees or Sheriff's search and rescue volunteers trained and certified through the County's UAS Program and/or the FAA, as applicable.

V. Compliance:

It shall be the responsibility of each County Department Head (DH) and Elected Official (EO), as well as the UAS Program Manager and Director of the Office of Emergency Management, to ensure compliance with this policy and procedures adopted under the policy.

VI. General Provisions:

The La Plata County UAS Program will be an iterative system created with the intent and understanding that as an emerging technology, the equipment, capabilities, regulations, acceptance and uses of the UAS may evolve over time. La Plata County will make the best use of the technology through continuing training, education and experience.

All County departments and offices, as well as the Sheriff's Volunteer Search and Rescue Team, will have access to the UAS technology and may request participation in the program for County operations. The UAS may be used during multi-agency operations involving County resources or having County responsibility and may be utilized through agreement with other local government agencies. The UAS may also be used through the Colorado Resource Mobilization Annex of the Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan. Priority of the UAS will be given to emergency support within La Plata County over other operations. Only La Plata County UAV PICs will operate the La Plata County UAVs regardless of jurisdiction or mission location.

A) UAS Program

The UAS Program will be managed through the La Plata County Office of Emergency Management. A UAS Program Manager will be assigned by the Director of the Office of Emergency Management with the concurrence of the County Manager and Sheriff. For any County department or office that intends to use the UAS, it is the responsibility of the Department Head or Elected Official to assign a UAS Project Coordinator to participate in the UAS Program Team and to coordinate usage of the equipment by

that department or office and to develop their UAS Projects.

The UAS Program Manager will be responsible for overall management of the UAS, implementation of the program, development of procedures and ensuring internal and external compliance with FAA and/or other regulatory agencies. The UAS Program Manager will work with the Department Heads and Elected Officials to educate their employees (and volunteers) on the uses and benefits of the technology and to facilitate participation in the UAS Program. The UAS Program Manager will be responsible for collecting flight logs and completing any reporting required by the FAA or other applicable agency.

The UAS Project Coordinators will work closely with each other and the UAS Program Manager to manage and develop the UAS Program; they will be responsible for coordinating their departmental participation in the UAS Program including development of their UAS Projects and their implementation of the UAS Program.

UAS Program development will be through the UAS Program Team. Regular meetings of the UAS Program Team will be held to assess and develop the program at intervals determined by the Team.

All use or implementation of the UAS will follow this UAS Policy and will be through development of UAS Projects and UAS Missions.

B) Recordkeeping

UAS Project Coordinators, UAS PICs and UAS PMCs will be responsible for maintaining operational records required by the UAS Program or FAA requirements and for making those records available to the UAS Program Manager.

Any department or office collecting any type of data and/or records using the UAS is responsible to ensure compliance with appropriate records retention procedures, chain of custody or security measures of the collecting department. The UAS Project Coordinator for each department or office is the custodian of the data and records collected.

C) Public Participation

The UAS Program Manager will work with County Administration to educate and inform the public concerning use of the UAS to ensure understanding of its purpose, benefits and proper utilization in each programmatic application.

The ability to observe UAS Training, UAS Missions or other demonstrations will be made available to the extent it is reasonable, safe and will not interfere in the mission or training objective.

D) Privacy

The public's right to privacy and civil liberties will be paramount in UAS Project development and UAS Mission planning. Each UAS Project will describe privacy considerations, applicable privacy laws, and data collection types and methodology, data use, data retention and data dissemination specific to the project objective. Failure to respect privacy concerns and adhere to Project guidelines and parameters may result in removal from the UAS Program Team, and could result in disciplinary action for employees and dismissal of volunteers from search and rescue, law enforcement and other volunteer groups working with the County.

UAS Projects will be reviewed by the UAS Program Team and legal counsel annually

through 2019 and every third year thereafter for compliance with common privacy and civil liberties practices, regulations or laws.

E) Equipment

La Plata County UAS equipment will be managed under the Office of Emergency Management. The UAS Program Manager will be responsible for ensuring all users of the equipment have appropriate levels of training, verifying certifications and ensuring the UAS is properly maintained. All supporting software, equipment registrations, radio licensing or other federal programs and requirements will be obtained or monitored by the UAS Program Manager.

The Purchase or housing of additional UAS equipment is prohibited unless approved by County Manager or Sheriff and UAS Program Manager is notified of such equipment. The UAS Project Coordinator of any department housing or purchasing equipment such as a UAV, flight camera or other aerial equipment is responsible for compliance with this UAS Policy and the UAS Program, and to coordinate these efforts with UAS Program Manager.

F) Training

All members of the La Plata County UAS Program Team are required to complete training outlined in the UAS Program Procedures and will be required to perform regular practice, participation or continuing education as required by the program. Certain operations have requirements by the FAA that must be fulfilled in order to perform functions such as piloting a UAV or overseeing flight operations during UAS Missions.

All training will be pre-approved in writing by the appropriate UAS Project Coordinator and based on departmental and UAS Program Procedures. All trainings will be posted through UAS Program schedule.

G) Certification

Only participants of the UAS Program Team who successfully complete La Plata County UAS training program and, if necessary, FAA certification for the operation of a small UAV, will be considered certified to function as part of a UAS Flight Team for UAS Missions. Certified persons on the UAS Flight Team include UAV PIC, UAV PMC, UAV Observer and UAS Equipment Operators.

Non-Certified persons include a UAS Participant and a Non-Participant.

H) Basic UAS Program

The Basic UAS Program includes any operations that fall under FAA guidelines and limitations outlined under what is known as "FAA Part 107". This generally includes rules regarding the speeds, distances and environmental conditions available to create safe and easily manageable operations along with associated FAA training.

I) Special UAS Services Program

The Special Services Program relates to public safety and emergency situations that may be authorized under a COA. The purpose of the COA is to allow the County to conduct public aircraft operations to meet the County needs for public safety and emergency situations.

J) UAS Project Implementation

UAS operations will be defined through the development of UAS Projects which will be developed by UAS Project Coordinators to be in accordance with this and other applicable County policy and State or Federal laws or regulation. Each Project will be based on an objective as described in UAS Procedures and will address purpose, scope, data, methodologies, equipment, safety, privacy and authority. UAS Projects will be reviewed by the County Attorney's office and approved by the County Manager or Elected Official having authority over the operation. The UAS Projects will define how UAS Missions are developed and approved.

K) UAS Mission Implementation

UAS Missions will only be performed if requested by or through a UAS Project Coordinator and posted to a UAS Program schedule. UAS Missions fitting a pre-approved UAS Project may be approved by the UAS Project Coordinator. UAS Missions outside the pre-approved UAS Projects will need additional approval by either the County Sheriff or his designee for any law enforcement related mission, or by the Director of the Office of Emergency Management or his designee for search and rescue, wildfire or other operation.

Requests for support by outside agencies will be made through a Project Coordinator or through the Colorado Mobilization Annex to the Program Manager and will require additional approval by either the County Sheriff or his designee for any statutory duty such as law enforcement, search and rescue, or wildfire operation; or by the County Manager or Director or the Office of Emergency Management for any other operation. Additionally, a County UAV PIC must be available and accept an outside request for UAS Mission assistance. Reimbursement for staff time, travel, UAS equipment usage or other expenses may be charged to a requesting agency by order of County Manager, Sheriff or Director of Emergency Management.

A UAS Mission shall only be performed if deemed safe by the UAS Flight Team, is within the certified limits of the UAV PIC and is within the limitations of FAA Part 107 or Certificate of Waiver or Authorization.

L) Coordination with Other Agencies

All UAS Missions will be coordinated with other appropriate agencies, Incident Command of an emergency or disaster, or as required by the FAA or other regulatory agency, or as required by La Plata County's UAS Program Procedures.