



MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING INSTRUCTION

AIRBORNE ASSESSMENT TEAM

ISSUED: December 19, 2025

EFFECTIVE: December 19, 2025

REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:
Assistant Chief Steven Johnson
DATE: November 13, 2025

ACTION: Amends SOI (April 7, 2025)

WILEAG STANDARD(S): 6.1.2

ROLL CALL VERSION

Contains only changes to current policy.
For complete version of SOI, see SharePoint.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the department to utilize UAS technology to enhance public safety for all residents. ~~UAS shall only be utilized~~ Only department owned UAS shall be used by trained and authorized personnel in accordance with the United States and State of Wisconsin Constitutions, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, Wisconsin State Law, and department policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. DRONE AS FIRST RESPONDER (DFR) OPERATIONS

A police response strategy which utilizes pre-positioned drones launched from stationary launch points to enable rapid, remote deployment to calls for police service, often prior to uniformed squad response, in order to enhance civilian and officer safety by increasing situational awareness.

BA. FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA)

C. PATROL LED OPERATIONS

A police response strategy which utilizes forward deployed remote pilots with drone equipment to enable rapid deployment, from areas out in the patrol field, to calls for service in order to enhance civilian and officer safety by increasing situational awareness.

DB. REMOTE PILOT IN COMMAND (RPIC)

EG. UNCREWED AERIAL VEHICLE (UAV)

FD. UNCREWED AERIAL SYSTEM (UAS)

GE. VISUAL OBSERVER (VO)

IV. PERSONNEL ORGANIZATION (WILEAG 6.1.2)

B. SELECTION OF AAT MEMBERS

2. Selected members will be required to complete all ~~required~~ training.

V. AUTHORIZED USE AND RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF UAS PROTECTIONS AND PROHIBITIONS (WILEAG 6.1.2)

VI. OPERATIONS (WILEAG 6.1.2)

AE. OPERATIONS AUTHORIZED USE OF UAS

Qualified, trained, and command authorized department personnel may conduct UAS operations in the following areas when approved by the team supervisor, or designee (unless the operation requires the approval of the team commander as delineated below):

6. Drone as First Responder (DFR) operations.

~~7~~6. In support of patrol department operations with authorization of the team commander.

~~8~~7. Counter UAS operations with authorization of the team commander.

~~9~~8. In support of other City of Milwaukee departments with authorization of the team commander.
(WILEAG 6.1.2.1)

Note: Prior to remote launch or upon arrival at the a scene, the RPIC shall make the final decision whether to deploy UAS technology.

B. PATROL LED OPERATIONS

~~1~~F. Police members shall ~~should~~ contact their ~~shift commander~~ dispatcher when on the scene of an incident that may benefit from the use of UAS technology in accordance with subsection EA. The shift commander shall report the details to the UAS team commander, or designee, by contacting the SPD at extension [REDACTED]. The dispatcher will then dispatch the closest available patrol led drone team recommended by the CAD system to the scene.

2. If it is determined that no patrol led drone team is on duty, a supervisor shall respond to the scene to assess whether a team call out is warranted. The on-scene supervisor shall contact their shift commander who in turn shall contact the Specialized Patrol (SPD) at extension [REDACTED] to relay information and request a team. SPD personnel shall gather facts surrounding the request before contacting the AAT commander to determine if personnel shall be assigned to the call.

~~1~~. SPD desk personnel shall gather and relay required information to the team commander, or designee, who shall determine if use of UAS technology is warranted and dispatch appropriate AAT personnel to the scene.

- ~~2. In the event that a need for UAS technology occurs outside the normal working hours of the AAT, the requesting supervisor shall contact the SPD at extension [REDACTED]. Desk personnel shall gather and relay the facts surrounding the request for UAS technology to the team commander who shall determine if the AAT will be assigned to the call for service.~~
- ~~3. Upon arrival at the call for service, the RPIC shall make the final decision whether to deploy UAS technology.~~

C. DRONE AS FIRST RESPONDER (DFR) OPERATIONS

1. Deployment

- a. RPIC's assigned to DFR operations shall monitor incoming calls for service and police radio frequencies to determine when deployment of DFR technology could potentially save lives, enhance civilian or officer safety, or positively impact the efficiency of department operations.
- b. RPIC's assigned to DFR operations shall have full discretion when determining whether to respond to a call for service.

2. Safety

- a. All DFR operations shall comply with the Certificate of Waiver governed by [14 CFR Part 91](#) issued to the department by the FAA.
- b. RPIC's assigned to DFR operations shall utilize web-based applications for the detection and monitoring of crewed air traffic in the vicinity of DFR operations. These applications shall rely on automatic dependent surveillance broadcast (ADS-B) information providing real time telemetry data of flights. DFR RPIC's shall give way to any crewed aircraft.
- c. During flight, DFR RPIC's should make reasonable efforts to avoid hovering over civilians and non-essential personnel.

DG. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

EH. COLLABORATION WITH CITY OF MILWAUKEE GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

- ~~Ff.~~ All UAS collected digital evidence shall be imported into Evidence.com no later than the end of the RPIC's tour of duty.
- ~~GJ.~~ Any complaint alleging inappropriate use of a UAS or a violation of a person's civil rights



JEFFREY B. NORMAN
CHIEF OF POLICE