



Policy Chapter: Chapter 15 Risk Management Services

Policy Number and Title: 15.016 Unmanned Aircraft System

I. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS or otherwise known as drones) operations at the University of North Texas (UNT or University). Approved operations of UAS on UNT property or as part of UNT-sponsored activities off-campus must be compliant with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, state law, and UNT policies and procedures.

II. Application of Policy

This policy applies to all employees, students, visitors, UNT affiliates, and any other individual or entity operating a UAS on UNT property or while conducting UNT-sponsored activities off-campus.

III. Policy Definitions

A. Accident

“Accident,” in this policy, means an occurrence associated with the operation of any public or civil unmanned aircraft system that takes place between the time that the system is activated with the purpose of flight and the time that the system is deactivated at the conclusion of its mission, in which: any person suffers death or serious injury or the aircraft holds an airworthiness certificate and sustains substantial damage.

B. Certificate of Authorization (COA) or Waiver

“Certificate of Authorization (COA) or Waiver,” in this policy, is an authorization granted by the Federal Aviation Administration to deviate from a regulation under [49 U.S.C. 44807, \(b\), \(2\)](#), if the proposed operation may be conducted safely under the terms of the waiver.

C. Commercial Operations

“Commercial Operations,” in this policy, means any operation where the operator receives direct or indirect payment or compensation for the operation. Compensation is not just limited to monetary payments but includes anything of value. Commercial operations include UNT employees who operate a UAS in the course and scope of work.

D. Confidential Information

“Confidential Information,” in this policy, means information that must be protected from unauthorized disclosure or public release, based on state or federal law (e.g., the Texas Public Information Act, and other constitutional, statutory, judicial, and legal agreement requirements).

E. Crewmember

“Crewmember,” in this policy, means a UAS flight crew member including pilots, sensor/payload operators, visual observers (VO), or other persons required to ensure safe

operation of a UAS.

F. Employee

“Employee,” in this policy, means an individual who is employed part-time, or full-time, or in a temporary capacity as faculty, staff, or who is required to be a student as a condition of employment.

G. Incident

“Incident,” in this policy, means an occurrence, other than an accident, associated with the operation of a UAS which affects or could affect the safety of operation.

H. Information Resource

“Information Resource,” in this policy, means the procedures, equipment, and software employed, designed, built, operated, and maintained to collect, record, process, store, retrieve, display, and transmit information, and associated personnel including consultants and contractors.

I. Media

“Media,” in this policy, means the collective communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information or data.

J. Model Aircraft

“Model Aircraft,” in this policy, means a UAV weighing less than 55 pounds, flown for recreational purposes according to the [FAA’s Model Aircraft Operations guidelines](#).

K. Outdoors

“Outdoors,” in this policy, means any area outside buildings or shelter.

L. Recreational Operations

“Recreational Operations,” in this policy, means an operation of a UAS for personal interests and enjoyment.

M. Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC)

“Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC),” in this policy, means the licensed pilot solely responsible for the safe operation of a UAS. The RPIC may only fly or be responsible for one aircraft at a time.

N. Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS)

“Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS),” in this policy, means a UAS but weighs less than 55 lbs.

O. Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Operator

“UAS Operator,” in this policy, means a person operating a UAS. If there is no RPIC, the UAS Operator is the person in charge and responsible for the safe conduct of the flight.

P. Unit

“Unit,” in this policy, means a UNT academic program, department, division, college, school, institute, center, laboratory, or related entity.

Q. Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS)

“Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS),” in this policy, means an unmanned aircraft vehicle and its associated elements that are required for the safe and efficient operation of an unmanned aircraft vehicle in the national airspace system.

R. Unmanned Aircraft Vehicle (UAV)

“Unmanned Aircraft Vehicle (UAV),” in this policy, means an aircraft operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft. This includes, but is not limited to, quad-copters; remote controlled planes; and devices commonly referred to as “drones.”

S. UNT Property

“UNT Property,” in this policy, means all real property owned by UNT, including the airspace above the property necessary for operating a UAS.

IV. Policy Responsibilities

A. UAS Acquisition and Disposal

1. UAS operator(s) must notify Risk Management Services (RMS) when a UAS is requested, or manufactured, and again after the UAS is operational as outlined in UAS Usage procedures maintained by RMS.
2. All UNT owned, acquired, or fabricated UAS must be properly tagged and inventoried according to [UNT Policy 10.048, Asset Management](#).
3. Disposal of UAS must follow [UNT Policy, 10.048 Asset Management](#).

B. UAV Registration Requirements

1. UAVs that weigh in excess of 0.55 lbs. must be registered with the FAA if operated outdoors.
2. The UAV registration number must be clearly legible and readily accessible on the UAV.
3. Non-US Citizens, who are not eligible to register a UAV in the United States, must follow [FAA guidelines for international UAS operators](#).

C. Classification of UAS Operations

Permissible UAS operations on UNT property or as part of UNT-sponsored activities off-campus fall into four categories:

1. Recreational Operation

Personal recreational operation of a UAS is not permitted on UNT property, unless UAS operations are in conjunction with a UNT-sponsored event, and prior review and approval from RMS has been obtained, as outlined in section IV.H. of this policy.

2. Educational Operation

The educational use of a UAS is permitted on UNT property when conducted as part of a student's coursework, with approval from RMS, as outlined in section IV.H. of this policy. Research and experimental flights are considered commercial operations.

3. Indoor Operation

Indoor use of UAS is permitted on UNT property or when UNT-sponsored activities occur off campus with approval from RMS, as outlined in section IV.H. of this policy.

4. Commercial Operation

Commercial UAS operations are permitted when they are conducted: (a) by a Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC), (b) in compliance with FAA regulations, and (c) with prior approval from RMS, as outlined in section IV.H. of this policy.

D. UAS Operator Responsibilities and Qualifications

1. License Requirements

a. Commercial Operations

1) UAS under 55 lbs.

All commercial UAS operations must be conducted or directly supervised by a certified Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC) with a small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) rating, or through the [49 U.S.C. 44807\(b\)\(2\)](#) exemption. See [FAA UAS exemption guidelines](#) for more information.

2) UAS at or above 55 lbs.

All UAS operators must have the appropriate license and have operational approval through the [49 U.S.C. 44807\(b\)\(2\)](#) exemption. See [FAA UAS exemption guidelines](#) for more information.

3) Non-US citizens

Non-U.S. citizens desiring to fly for commercial purposes may do so under the [Small UAS rule \(Part 107\)](#) by obtaining a Remote Pilot Certificate (RPC) issued

by the FAA. Additional information is available at on the [FAA's Certificated Remote Pilots including Commercial Operators web site](#).

b. Indoor Operations

No license is needed, but UAS operators must follow this policy and related procedures for all indoor UAS operations.

c. Recreational and Educational Operations

No license is needed, but all UAS operators for recreational and educational operations must fly in accordance with the [Special Rule for Model Aircraft \(Public Law 112-95 Section 336\)](#).

2. Airspace Authorization

For commercial operations, the RPIC must have appropriate FAA airspace authorization and provide that documentation to RMS before initiating UAS operations.

3. UAS Use on UNT Property

All UAS activity, including indoor use, requires prior review and authorization by RMS as outlined in section IV.H. of this policy.

4. UNT-Sponsored UAS Operation Off-Campus

The operation of UAS off-campus by UNT employees in the course and scope of employment must have prior approval by the applicable unit administrator and RMS, as outlined in section IV.H. of this policy. The UAS pilot must also obtain permission for UAS operations on private property as necessary and provide that documentation to RMS.

E. Authorization for Media Use

Any media capture by an external commercial entity or a media outlet must comply with UNT guidelines and receive prior approval through University Brand Strategies and Communications (UBSC) before applying for Authorization for UAS Use on campus or UNT-sponsored activities off campus.

F. Export Control

Any research activity involving UAS must be reviewed and receive prior approval by the Office of Research & Innovation (RI) before RMS can approve UAS use, to ensure compliance with [UNT Policy 13.10, Export Controls](#). Please refer to the [UNT RI Export Controls](#) web page for additional guidance.

G. Third-Party

UNT employees, or units using a third-party contractor to operate UAS, must comply with [Regents Rule 03.900](#) and have a contract in place prior to UAS operations.

H. Authorization for UAS Use

RMS is responsible for approving any use of UAS on UNT property or for UNT-sponsored activities off campus.

1. Application

Regardless of flight location or purpose, anyone intending to operate UAS on UNT property or at UNT-sponsored activities off campus must complete and submit all required forms to RMS and receive approval prior to operating any UAS.

2. Application Review

RMS will either approve the request as submitted, provide conditional approval, or deny the request and provide notification to the applicant. UNT reserves the right to cancel or re-schedule any approved UAS usage.

3. Approval

Upon RMS approval, the applicant will be issued a UAS Use Permit, authorizing the use of UAS as outlined in the permit. The RPIC or UAS Operator must keep a physical copy of the valid UAS Use permit for any operations.

4. Permit Scope

The UAS Use Permit is only valid for the duration of time and for the conditions listed on the permit. Any time or condition deviation requires a new application be submitted for approval.

I. Permitted UAS Operations

1. Communications and Notice

The RPIC or UAS operator must notify all parties who could be affected by the use of UAS including any airport and airport air traffic control tower.

2. UAS Permit

Whenever a UAS governed by this policy is in operation, the RPIC or UAS operator must have physical possession of a valid UAS Use permit (issued by RMS) and all other required documents for such operation, and must display the permit or other documentation upon request from RMS, UNT PD, or other legitimate authorities with jurisdiction.

If, upon review of the permit, the UAS operator or RPIC is unauthorized to fly, or the situation is deemed unsafe, RMS or UNT Police are authorized to immediately halt UAS operations.

3. Accident and Incident Reporting

Any accident or incident involving a UAS must be reported to RMS within 24 hours. The

RPIC or the UAS operator is required to comply with FAA and National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) reporting requirements.

4. Liability for Accident Damages

Third-party, non-UNT UAS pilots, operators, users, and owner, are jointly and severally liable for any and all damages, claims, liabilities, judgments, and attorney fees, which may arise as a result of the third-party, non-UNT pilot, operator, user, or owner's UAS accident.

J. Insurance Requirements

Insurance may be required for UAS use on UNT property or as part of UNT-sponsored activities off campus. Insurance requirements and coverage will be determined by RMS.

K. Security

A UAS is considered an information resource. UAS owners must follow applicable guidelines outlined in the [UNT System Information Security Handbook](#) for information and physical security.

1. Information Security

Controls must be in place to prevent unauthorized access, accidental modification, or disclosure of confidential information. Use of a UAS must not disrupt or endanger information resource assets, including UNT networks and devices connected to a UNT network. If confidential UNT data will be used during the operation of a UAS, or stored in a UAS, approval from the data owner must be obtained prior to use. Confidential data stored in a UAS must be encrypted.

2. Third Party

If a UAS will be used by a third-party to access information resources or confidential UNT data, an information security risk assessment must be completed in accordance with the [UNT System Information Security Handbook](#). Services provided by a third-party must comply with the security requirements identified in the [UNT System Information Security Handbook](#).

L. Prohibited UAS Use

1. UAS operations that illegally monitor or record confidential, institutional, or personal information are prohibited, including, but not limited to: an individual's workspace or computer; restrooms; changing, dressing, or locker rooms; residential rooms, hallways, or lounges; health treatment rooms; or daycare facilities.
2. UAS operations that create an unsafe environment to the University community or the public are prohibited, as defined in [14 C.F.R. 107.23](#).
3. UAS operations are prohibited, if any person acting as a crewmember of a UAS:

- a. has, within 12 hours, consumed any alcoholic beverage;
 - b. is under the influence of alcohol;
 - c. has used any drugs that affect the person's faculties in any way contrary to safety;
or
 - d. has an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater in a blood or breath specimen.
4. Flying UAS in and around stadiums (within a radius of three nautical miles) is prohibited, starting one hour before and ending one hour after the scheduled time of any NCAA Division 1 Football game.

M. Exceptions

Prior notice is not required for use of UAS on UNT property by emergency personnel acting under the authority of applicable laws.

N. Sanctions

A UNT employee who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. A student who violates this policy may be in violation of the Code of Student Conduct and will be referred to the Dean of Student's Office for appropriate disciplinary action.

V. Resources/Forms/Tools

[FAA Educational Use of UAS](#)

[FAA FAQ](#)

VI. References and Cross-References

[14 C.F.R. Part 47 \(Traditional Aircraft Registration\)](#)

[14 C.F.R. § 91.17 \(Prohibit Operating UAS While Under the Influence\)](#)

[14 C.F.R. § 91.19 \(Submitting to Alcohol Tests\)](#)

[14 C.F.R. Part 107 \(Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems\)](#)

[49 U.S.C. § 44807](#)

[49 C.F.R. Part 830 \(NTSB Accident and Incident Notification Requirements\)](#)

[Public Law 112-95 Section 336 \(Special Rule for Model Aircraft\)](#)

[TX Govt Code Title 4, Subtitle B, Chapter 423 \(Texas Privacy Act – Use of Unmanned Aircraft\)](#)

[Regent Rule 03.900, Delegation of Authority for Contracts and Agreements](#)

[UNT Policy 05.033, Staff Employee Discipline and Involuntary Termination](#)

[UNT Policy 05.042, Grievance](#)

[UNT Policy 06.025, Faculty Misconduct and Discipline](#)

[UNT Policy 07.012 Code of Student Conduct](#)

[UNT Policy 10.048, Asset Management](#)

[UNT Policy 13.010, Export Controls](#)

[UNT Policy 14.002, Information Security](#)

VII. Revision History

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