

Safe and Responsible Use and Operations of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones)

Title/Subject: SAFE & RESPONSIBLE USE & OPERATIONS OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (DRONES)

Applies to: Faculty Staff Students Student Employees Visitors Contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: October 21, 2024

Contact for More Information: Central Michigan University Drone Lab

Board Policy Administrative Policy Procedure Guideline

BACKGROUND:

Operation and use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) (also known as unmanned aircraft systems or drones) and Small Unoccupied Aircraft is regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the relevant Michigan State laws. This policy explains the actions Central Michigan University (CMU) will take to review University-sponsored UAS use; reduce risks to safety, security and privacy; and ensure that the best interests and obligations of the University with regard to UAS are being met.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction to CMU faculty, staff and students, as well as guests to CMU properties, on the acceptable operation of drones on the campus of CMU.

DEFINITIONS:

1. **Unmanned Aircraft or Drone:** an aircraft flown by a remote pilot via a ground control system, or autonomously through use of an on-board computer, communication links, and any additional equipment that is necessary for the unoccupied aircraft to operate safely.
2. **Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS):** An unoccupied aircraft and all associated support equipment, control station, data links, telemetry, communications, navigation equipment, and other equipment necessary to operate the unoccupied aircraft.
3. **Drone Swarm (Drone Lightshow):** Drone Lightshows are performed by illuminated, synchronized and choreographed groups of drones that arrange themselves into various aerial formations. Swarms are controlled by master computer programs under the control of a single Remote Pilot in Command who has the proper authorization from the FAA.
4. **Remote Pilot in Command:** An individual who has received a Remote Pilot Certification from the FAA is directly responsible for and is the final authority as to the operation of the small unoccupied aircraft system.
5. **Visual Line of Sight (VLOS):** Continuous, unaided visual contact with the UAS.
6. **Small Unmanned Aircraft:** Means an Unmanned Aircraft weighing less than 55 pounds on takeoff, including everything that is on board or otherwise attached to the aircraft. <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-I/subchapter-F/part-107> section 107.3 Definitions.
7. **CMU Property:** Any building or property owned or controlled by CMU that is used in direct support of, or in relation to, the institution's educational purposes.

Authority: Robert O. Davies

History: NA

Last Revisited: 10-21-2024

Next Time to Review:

Keywords: Drone; Drone Lab; UAS; SUAS

Safe and Responsible Use and Operations of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones)

POLICY:

Any UAS used on CMU Property or operated by CMU faculty and staff shall comply with the following:

1. All flights of Unmanned Aircraft Systems on CMU's campus must follow the FAA rules and regulations for UA's - <https://www.faa.gov/uas> as well as applicable State and Federal laws, and University Policies.
2. CMU Faculty/Staff teaching classes involving Drones should have completed the FAA's Part 107 training or have an FAA Commercially Licensed Pilot in charge present when drones are in use. https://www.faa.gov/uas/commercial_operators/become_a_drone_pilot
3. When training students in a class, the use of drones falls under Section 350 of Public Law 115-254, the FAA Re-Authorization Act of 2018, which allows educational institutions to operate under the exception for limited recreation provided the operations are for the purpose of education or research. However, students must complete the free, online, Recreational UAS Safety Test (TRUST). Before flying a drone, students must present proof of completion to the instructor. FAA TRUST training: https://www.faa.gov/uas/recreational_flyers/knowledge_test_updates#TAs.

In addition, no footage shot by non-commercially licensed students may be used for any promotional purposes. This is classified as a non-educational use and thus subject to the Part 107 rules for a commercial operation.

4. Night Operations – Pilots must know and comply with all FAA or State regulations relating to flying UAS at night.
5. Flight over people – Pilots must know and comply with all FAA (14 C.F.R. § 107.39) or State regulations relating to flying UAS over people.
6. While flying Drones indoors does not fall under the FAA's controlled airspace rules, safety should always be a priority. In general, Drones should not be flown over people.
7. CMU subjects indoor flight over people within a campus building to the same safety measures set out in the FAA's Part 107 requirements for flight over people in the national airspace.
8. Flights indoors require notification of the building supervisor.
9. No flyovers of campus with views into campus building windows (This is to maintain the privacy of students, faculty, and staff.) See Prohibited Uses.
10. The purchase of Drones needs the approval of the Office of Information Technology (OIT), and the Drone Lab Manager. OIT's role is to review any software that may impact CMU computing systems. The role of the Drone Lab is only to ensure that the purchasing department/college is meeting FAA regulations and University Policies regarding Drones and their safe operation.
11. Prior to operating a Drone on CMU Property, Drone operators, as a matter of procedure should notify, by phone or email, the CMU Police Department of the location, date, and time of planned Drone use. (989-774-3081 or police@cmich.edu).
12. Approval of special operation requests submitted to the FAA, as defined in Part 107, are approved by either the CMU Police Department or the CMU Drone Lab Manager. (Example, flights during a CMU Football game or other events with restricted airspace).

Safe and Responsible Use and Operations of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones)

13. Any Drone operations involving flights over private property requires written permission from the property owner. The exceptions to this are Drone operations involving law enforcement and/or other emergency services.
14. Approval for exceptions to the CMU Drone Policy must be submitted to the Drone Lab Manager, who will consult with the appropriate CMU administrators/departments.

Prohibited Uses

1. If operating a UAS to record or transmit visual images, operators must take all reasonable measures to avoid areas normally considered private, such as residence halls and other living quarters. MCL 259.322
2. No person shall knowingly and intentionally operate a UAS in a manner that interferes with the official duties of any law enforcement official, firefighter, emergency medical services personnel, search and rescue personnel, state correctional officer, or any other individual employed by the department of corrections, or a local corrections officer. See MCL 259.321 for definitions.
3. No person shall knowingly and intentionally operate a UAS in a manner that subjects an individual to harassment (as defined in MCL 750.411h and 750.411i), within a distance that, if the person were to do so personally rather than through remote operation of an unoccupied aircraft, would be a violation of a restraining order, judicial order, Section 539j of the Michigan penal code, 1931 PA 328, MCL 750.539j, or to otherwise capture photographs, video, or audio recordings of an individual in a manner that would invade the individual's reasonable expectation of privacy. MCL 259.322.
4. No person who is a required to register as a sex offender under the Michigan Sex Offenders Registration act shall operate a UAS to knowingly and intentionally follow, contact, or capture images of another individual, if the individual's sentence in a criminal case would prohibit the individual from following, contacting, or capturing the image of the other individual.

Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to, modify or eliminate this policy and or its content. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures or guidelines relative to this subject.