Purpose

This policy applies to all drone operations on UCSF property. This policy is derived from the UCOP Unmanned Aircraft System (Drone) Policy and governs all drone flight operations. The purpose of this policy is to promote safe operations of drones and model aircraft while meeting the University’s regulatory compliance and reporting requirements.

All personnel (including but not limited to UCSF faculty, staff, students, non-affiliates, and third-party contractors) operating drones or model aircraft for any purpose on or above University owned or leased property are required to follow this policy. All drone operations are to be performed in a manner that mitigates risk to safety, security, and privacy and ensures compliance with all applicable laws.

Definitions

Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS)

A UAS (commonly known as a drone) consists of an unmanned aircraft, a ground-based control unit, and communications between the two.

Policy

Requirements for Drone Operations

Anyone who seeks to operate a drone for university business must comply with the following:

- Have approval from the appropriate aviation agency (i.e. FAA) and operate in compliance with all applicable regulations and rulings.
- Submit drone application to UCSF EH&S.
- Receive approval from UCSF EH&S.
- Maintain sufficient liability insurance coverage.
- Drone flights should be conducted in a manner that ensures public safety, right to privacy, civil rights and civil liberties.
- Recreational drone flights are prohibited at UCSF.
- Follow the UCOP Best Practices for UAS Privacy, Transparency, and Accountability guidelines.
Drone Flight Applications and Approval Process

Prior to flying a drone on UCSF Owned Property, please visit ehs.ucsf.edu [5] for instructions.

a. Third Party Flight Requests (non-UCSF employees, faculty, staff or students) Instructions

Flight requests by non-UCSF personnel are to be submitted by a UCSF employee, faculty/staff member or student who manages the project.

b. Drone Flight Request Approval Process

Applications undergo review by the following listed below (UCSF internal review process can be found here [6]):

- UCSF Risk Management
- UC Director of UAS Operations (located at UC Merced)
- UCSF Police Department
- UCSF Medical Center Helideck Manager
- UCSF EH&S

The Drone Approval Group is responsible for reviewing potential risks that may occur during a flight operation and providing approval for insurance coverage.

Record Keeping


Operational Restrictions

Due to the nature of UCSF properties, NO RECREATIONAL DRONE OPERATIONS ARE PERMITTED on any UCSF owned or leased property.

Drone operations on properties adjacent to UCSF must obtain applicable permits through the City and County of San Francisco [7], or the appropriate municipal jurisdiction.

Mission Bay - UCSF Helideck 18CN:

Medical Helideck because helicopter operations may be underway, all drone operations adjacent to Mission Bay Hospital must adhere to the following. Within 1 mile (5,280 feet) radius of helideck UCSF operates a life-support helicopter on three (3) 4,000 foot horizontal permitted visual approaches, roughly aligned in east, north and west directions. Within this radius is substantial construction activity which includes many large construction cranes, complicating the visual flight approach environment. Beyond the 1-mile general visual approach is an instrument approach which can be altered vertically to some extent through NOTAM instructions to pilots. Drone operators must understand and adhere to the following operational guidelines:

- Proposed UAS/drone operations outside of the 1-mile radius are allowed as directed by FAA governance as long as the drone operator is cognizant and avoids helicopter flight.
- Within the 1-mile radius UAS/drone operations must be under 156 feet mean sea level (MSL) in relation to topography (140 feet AGL at actual helideck height).
- Operations/flights above 140 AGL at Helideck/156 MSL within the 1-mile radius is unacceptable due to the safety risks placed on helicopter flight.

AT&T Ballpark:
Under FAA rules, drones cannot be flown within 3 nautical miles of AT&T Park before, during, or after MLB games, NFL games, or Division 1 College Football games without FAA authorization. This restriction takes effect starting one hour before scheduled events, until one hour after event concludes (FAA Title 14 CFR section 99.7 [8]).

**General Guidelines:**

- Do not fly over any non-UAS/drone crewmember. This includes crew or workers within the same company, but not part of the UAS/drone operation.
- Maintain a safety buffer of one quarter of the proposed flight altitude. For example, if the operator wants to fly at 100 ft. above the ground, an appropriate safety buffer would be 25 ft. This may be adjusted with different sized aircraft and different proposed flight operations.
- Either the pilot or additional crew members must have visual of the area below the drone at all times.
- For recurrent pre-approved operations, provide notice at least one business day in advance to drones@ucsf.edu [9]. Operators may also choose to propose a weekly schedule (such as every Wednesday, Friday at 7am). This should be coordinated with the needs of all stakeholders, and balanced with the operational needs of the operators. Since drones are heavily affected by weather, it is difficult to assess usage more than a day or two in advance.
- Point of contact communication should be checked every month on both sides (make sure everyone has up-to-date cell numbers, no changes in pilots).
- Drone operations may not be used to monitor, record, or observe any campus events, activities, or performances.

**References**

- UCOP Unmanned Aircraft System (Drone) Policy [3]
- Refer to UC Unmanned Aircraft Systems Safety [10] for more detailed information, including applicable FAA regulations. This document also provides system-wide expertise, support and training for regulatory compliance, risk management, and the safe operation of UASs.
  - The FAA provides a summary of the rule [12]
- UAS/Drone Filming Policy within San Francisco [7]

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Source URL: https://policies.ucsf.edu/policy/550-25

Links
[1] https://policies.ucsf.edu/policy/550
[2] mailto:ExecutiveViceChancellor@ucsf.edu
[5] https://ehs.ucsf.edu/drone-operations