



SAN JOSE POLICE DEPARTMENT

TRAINING BULLETIN

TO: ALL DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

FROM: Paul Joseph
Chief of Police

SUBJECT: PUBLIC USE OF DRONES

DATE: May 26, 2026

Bulletin #2026-006

An unmanned aerial system (UAS) is a system that includes the necessary equipment, network, and personnel to control an unmanned aircraft. An unmanned aircraft is an aircraft intended to navigate in the air without an onboard pilot. It is alternatively called a Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV), Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS), or drone.

Law enforcement has seen an increase in drone activity in restricted airspace, near critical infrastructure, and at active police operations. These drone incursions are not only dangerous, in some instances, they are also illegal.

Flying drones near airports is prohibited by federal law. The airspace around these facilities is tightly controlled to ensure the safety of manned aircraft. There is also concern about drones flying near critical infrastructure. [REDACTED] it is a concern due to the prevalence of weaponized drones worldwide, including in the United States.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

In the United States, as soon as an aircraft leaves the ground, it falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Local law enforcement cannot enforce any federal laws relating to drone use (e.g., remote pilot certification, registration, altitude limits, airspace rules, etc.).

However, as of the publication of this Training Bulletin, police officers can enforce two California laws regulating the use of drones [[PC § 402](#) (interfere with first responder activity) and [PC § 4577](#) (operate a drone on or above a correctional facility)]. Sworn personnel may also enforce other existing laws if a drone is being used during the commission of a crime [e.g., PC § 647(j)(1) (unlawful invasion of privacy) and PC § 646.9 (stalking)]. The reasonable suspicion or probable cause associated with the crime is sufficient for a detention or arrest.

[REDACTED]

AIRPORT OPERATIONS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

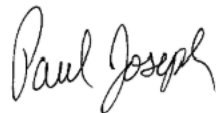
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Any additional questions can be directed to the Department's drone program administrators,

[REDACTED]



Paul Joseph
Chief of Police

PJ:NB:NY:JS