

7.17 - UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

Effective: XXXX, 2025

Purpose: This policy establishes guidelines for the use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), commonly referred to as drones, on the campus of the University to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local laws, to protect the safety and privacy of the campus community and to mitigate risks associated with UAS operations.

Scope: This policy applies to all faculty, staff, students, contractors, and visitors who operate UAS on or above property owned, leased, or controlled by Emporia State University. It also covers any UAS activity associated with university-sponsored events, activities, or research.

Responsible Office: Office of General Counsel

Policy Statement: No UAS may be operated on or above Emporia State University property without prior written authorization from the [POSITION OR OFFICE]. This includes all academic, recreational, and commercial uses.

All UAS operations must comply with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, including but not limited to registration requirements, flight restrictions, and operational guidelines, as well as any applicable Kansas state laws.

UAS Operations for teaching, research, and other academic purposes which are conducted or supervised by regular University faculty are permitted. Prior to such UAS operations, the responsible faculty member will provide their dean with the following written information:

- Course number and name in which UAS operations will occur; OR
- Nature of research or other academic purpose that will include UAS operations; AND
- A general description of the goal(s) of the UAS operations; AND
- A flight plan, including date(s), flight path, name(s) of operators, verification that all operators are properly certified or licensed, description of UAV to be used, and any other relevant information. Only one flight plan will be necessary for UAS operations occurring during a semester in the same course, or during a research project, or during another educational purpose project.

The dean is responsible for ensuring that ESU Police and the Office for Risk Management (ORM) are aware. ESU Police and ORM are responsible for including others, as necessary, to ensure all bases are covered.

All other UAS operations must receive prior written approval from the University ESU Police and the Office for Risk Management. ESU Police and ORM will verify with other departments, as necessary. A condition of receiving approval for UAS operations under this section is that the operator/owner of the UAS will indemnify and protect the University and its personnel,

along with the Kansas Board of Regents and its personnel, against any liability, injury, or damage resulting from UAS operations, as well as a waiver and release of liability for any injury or damage suffered by the operator/owner of the UAS. A request for approval must include a flight plan with the following written information:

- A description of the purpose and goal(s) of the UAS operations; AND
- Date(s) of operations, flight path, name(s) of operators, verification that all operators are properly certified or licensed, description of UAV to be used, owner(s) of the UAV to be used, and, a statement that the UAS will not be used for any propose prohibited by this policy.

Prohibited Uses

The following UAS operations are prohibited without express permission:

- Commercial operations without the authorization of the University;
- Operations that may violate a reasonable expectation of privacy;
- Operations that present a risk of personal injury or property damage;
- Operations that interfere with University operations;
- Flights over Welch Stadium;
- Flights over groups of people; AND
- The dropping, releasing, launching, or other disengagement of any object of any type from the UAV.

Reporting Incidents

Any accidents, injuries, or damages involving UAS operations must be reported immediately to Emporia State University Police and Safety. The operator is responsible for cooperating with any investigations that occur.

Exceptions to this policy may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Vice President of [Steven or Cory?]. Requests for exceptions must be submitted in writing and include a justification for the requested exception.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension, expulsion, or termination of employment. Unauthorized UAS may be confiscated, and the operator may be held liable for any damages or injuries resulting from their operation.

Definitions: All words and phrases shall be interpreted utilizing their plain meanings unless otherwise defined in another University or Board of Regents policy or by statute or regulation.

Campus – All property owned, leased, or controlled by Emporia State University.

Operator – Any individual or entity controlling the UAS during flight operations.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) – An aircraft without a human pilot onboard, operated remotely or autonomously, including the aircraft and associated elements such as communication links and control components.

Procedures: All procedures linked and related to the policies above shall have the full force and effect of policy if said procedures have first been properly approved by the University's administrator in charge of Campus and Facilities procedures.
[Hyperlink to Campus and Facilities Procedures]

Related Policy Information: [Include here any supporting information for this policy]

History: Adopted: mm/dd/2025 [Approved by President and included in UPM as Policy 7.17 – Unmanned Aircraft Systems]