

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (“Drone”) Policy

Scope

This policy applies to:

- WPI faculty, staff, students and visitors operating [unmanned aircraft systems \(UAS\)](#) in any location as part of their WPI employment or as part of WPI activities;
- The operation by any person of UAS or model aircraft on or in the airspace above WPI property;
- The purchase of UAS with funding through WPI, including university accounts and grants, and;
- The hiring for or contracting for any UAS by a WPI business unit.

Policy Statement

WPI supports the use of UAS to enhance the business, research and instructional goals of the university. However, WPI must take into consideration the privacy and safety issues associated with UAS use.

The outdoor operation of UAS including drones and model aircraft is regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and relevant state law. WPI will establish procedures required to ensure compliance with those legal obligations and to reduce risks to safety, security and privacy.

Recreational UAS use on or over WPI property is not permitted.

Procedures

1. All members of the WPI community are personally responsible for complying with FAA regulations, state and federal laws, and WPI policies.
2. Any WPI employee or student wishing to operate a UAS as part of their employment or as part of a WPI academic or research program must first notify the Office of Public Safety. Additionally, for outdoor operation of UAS:
 - a. operate as a [14 CFR Part 107 Pilot in Command \(PIC\)](#) for UAS weighing less than 55 lbs.; or
 - b. obtain an [exemption from § 333 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 \(FMRA\)](#) for UAS weighing 55 lbs. or more; or
 - c. obtain a [Certificate of Waiver or Authorization \(COA\)](#) issued by the FAA.
3. Any third party wishing to use a UAS or model aircraft over WPI property must first receive approval through the Office of Public Safety. Third parties planning to use UAS must also provide proof of FAA compliance. In addition, operation of a UAS by a third

party over WPI property must be under a contract which holds WPI harmless from any resulting claims or harm to individuals and damage to WPI property and provides insurance as required by the Office of University Compliance and Risk Management.

4. Use of UAS must comply with any other applicable WPI policies and the [Code of Conduct](#). Use of UAS for video or electronic surveillance in violation of applicable law or these policies is strictly prohibited.

Violations & Sanctions

- Any violations of WPI policies by an individual will be handled in accordance with applicable WPI policies and procedures, which may include disciplinary actions up to and including suspension, expulsion or termination from WPI.
- Legal prohibitions regarding physical presence on campus/trespassing and other legal action may be pursued against third parties that operate UAS in violation of this policy.
- Fines or damages incurred by individuals or business units will not be paid by WPI.

Definitions

- **Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)** - UAS are also known as or may be characterized as Drones. According to the FAA, a UAS is the unmanned aircraft and all of the associated support equipment, control station, data links, telemetry, communications and navigation equipment, etc., necessary to operate the unmanned aircraft. UAS may have a variety of names including quadcopter, quadrotor, etc. FAA regulation applies to UAS regardless of size or weight. Model aircraft are not considered by the FAA as UAS and have different regulations.
- **Model Aircraft** - Model aircraft are considered differently by the FAA than other UAS and have different regulations. Model aircraft are not for business purposes, only for hobby and recreation. Model aircraft must be kept within visual sightline of the operator, and must weigh under 55 pounds. Model aircraft must be flown a sufficient distance from populated areas.
- **§ 333 Exemption** – FAA exemption based on Section 333 of the FMRA which grants the Secretary of Transportation the authority to determine whether an airworthiness certificate is required for a UAS to operate safely in the National Airspace System.
- **COA**- Certificate of Authorization or Waiver. According to the FAA, the COA is an authorization issued by the Air Traffic Organization to a public operator for a specific UA activity. After a complete application is submitted, FAA conducts a comprehensive operational and technical review. If necessary, provisions or limitations may be imposed as part of the approval to ensure the UA can operate safely with other airspace users. An abbreviated COA is issued with a § 333 exemption.

History

- Version 1.0 – July 1, 2017