## UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS (UAS)

# Drone as First Responder (DFR) Program

THE HEART BEHIND THE BADGE

**Community safety is the Chula Vista Police Department's first priority. We are excited to share this program with you.**

## Program Mission

The Chula Vista Police Department's Drone as First Responder (DFR) Program provides airborne support to public safety operations in a safe, responsible, and transparent manner to protect the public, preserve the peace, reduce response times and increase overall quality of life in Chula Vista.

## What is the Drone as First Responder program?

In 2018, the Chula Vista Police Department (California) pioneered a new concept in rapid response to police emergencies: Using unmanned aerial systems (commonly known as drones) to pro-actively respond to emergency calls. The concept was so revolutionary that in May of 2018, it was chosen as the only municipal program in the nation to be tested as part of the FAA's Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Integration Pilot Program (IPP).

The Drone as First Responder (DFR) concept is different than traditional drone programs in that it is proactive rather than reactive. Instead of launching a drone after an officer is already on scene, Chula Vista's DFR program stations drones at permanent locations throughout the city and respond proactively to emergencies as soon as they happen.

The intent of the program is to get a drone on scene before responding officers arrive. Certified teleoperators can evaluate the situation remotely and relay information to officers and field supervisors. The drone can also feed live-streaming video of the incident to commanders and first responders. This helps personnel determine the best tools, tactics and resources to safely mitigate a problem – often before officers arrive on scene.

The program gives first responders real-time tactical information and even "eyes on scene", proving to be a powerful de-escalation tool. Since the program was first launched, there have been multiple incidents where officers have scaled down their tactics and successfully defused situations with reduced use of force.

## DFR Groundbreaking Achievements

- CVPD was selected by the FAA as one of only 10 teams among hundreds of applicants as part of the FAA's Integration Pilot Project (IPP) and was the only law enforcement member to participate. The IPP is a federal initiative designed to help integrate drones into the National Air Space (NAS).
- FAA authorization to fly Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS waiver). This allows drones to fly up to 3 miles in any direction from the launch site. Maintaining visual line of sight is considered a major component of drone flight. It is the prevailing limit on how far a drone pilot can fly their drone which also takes into consideration other factors such as weather conditions and the presence of large obstacles. CVPD is the only law enforcement agency in the nation currently authorized for BVLOS.
- FAA approval for complete citywide coverage (52 square miles) of DFR providing for a new and effective way of providing law enforcement critical information to respond to Calls For Service, emergency situations or to conduct criminal investigations. Some examples include; providing an overhead view of an area or incident for ground personnel, safely clearing the exterior of buildings, providing detailed documentation of crime and accident scenes, and searching for lost or missing persons. The multiple drone launch sites allows for DFR coverage for the vast majority of the geographic area of Chula Vista.
- FAA approval allowing (2) drones to be in operation for (1) separate incident. CVPD is currently the only law enforcement agency in the country authorized by the FAA to have (2) drones flying in close proximity airspace for (1) specific incident. This will allow for drones to remain on-scene at a critical incident and provide real-time information to first responders without a lack of drone coverage.
- CVPD is the first and only police department in the nation to test and successfully use Live911. This revolutionary software allows for officers to live-stream 911 calls directly to officers in the field. Drone teleoperators (drone pilots) monitor Live911 to get a "jump-start" and launch the drone immediately to deliver live-stream video to responding officers providing quality information for enhanced decision making allowing for safer outcomes for everyone involved.
- The DFR program has now responded to thousands of separate incidents and the program continues to serve the residents of Chula Vista by reducing response times and increasing safety.

## International Recognition

- 2019 California Police Chiefs Association (CPCA) & Motorola Excellence in Technology Innovation Award recognizing CVPD for its superior achievement and innovation in the field of technology.
- 2020 International Association Chiefs of Police (IACP) Leadership Award Winner in Police Aviation.
- 2020 Association for Unmanned Vehicles Systems International (AUVSI) Award Winner for CVPD's Drone as First Responder Program.

## How does the DFR program protect the community's privacy?

The intent of the DFR program is to enhance the Police Department's response to emergency calls for service. The program provides officers with timely information, helping keep citizens safe. Drones are used during an active response to an emergency or other call for police assistance.

The Chula Vista Police Department's policies prohibit drone operators from intentionally recording or transmitting images of any location where a person would have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as private backyards or inside private buildings, except where authorized by a warrant issued by a judge or in emergency situations.

## How are DFR video and photos handled and who has access?

All video and photo evidence taken during any UAS mission is stored in the same manner and location as Body Worn Camera (BWC) video and other investigative evidence. The Police Department utilizes a private "cloud" service, Evidence.com, to store all digital evidence. The service is authorized and certified under both state and federal regulations for the security and protection of confidential information and is available only for official law enforcement purposes. Video and photos are stored and saved for a limited time (one year or less) unless it is categorized as evidence in an actual crime or formal investigation. Then it is stored for a period of time consistent with all other evidence related to that incident/investigation.

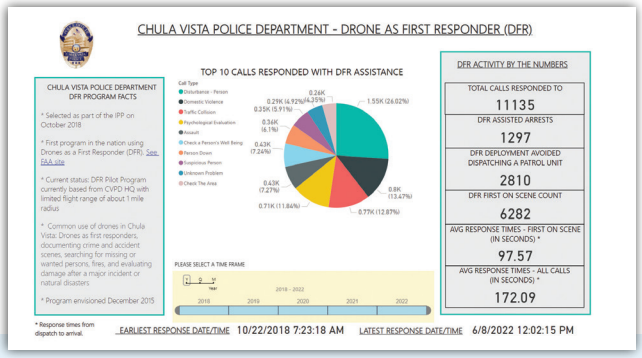
Generally, UAS photos and video are considered part of the investigative record and are not available to the public under the California Public Records Act (CPRA) or Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). For more details, please refer to the Chula Vista Police Department Policy on Portable Audio/Video Recorders.

# De-escalation at its best!

- Our personnel deploys a variety of strategies to gather important information about hazards and threats, or the lack thereof, to avoid unnecessary confrontations.
- By using DFR, we provide officers, dispatchers and supervisors with invaluable real-time information via their cell phone or computer.
- Our innovative use of drones as first responders (DFR) allows officers to view potential hazards and develop sound strategies and tactics before rushing into a potentially dangerous situation.
- **www.chulavistapd.org**: CVPD's website tracks and stores online flight history and all drone-related activity.

## Drone Flight History Maps

To achieve public transparency, CVPD uses drone detection software to track all drone flights launched by the Chula Vista Police Department. CVPD is making sure their drone flight data is available to the public on our website at **www.chulavistapd.org**.




# FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

### What is a drone or UAS?

UAS is an Unmanned Aerial System and is commonly called a drone. A drone is an aerial device with an onboard computer that is operated remotely, generally by a pilot on the ground using a handheld controller. Small drones are battery operated, weigh less than 55 pounds, have several rotors like a helicopter, and are equipped with a video camera.

### Where is the video and photos taken by the UAS stored?

All video and photo evidence taken during any UAS mission is stored in the same manner and location as Body Worn Camera (BWC) video and other investigative evidence. The Police Department utilizes a private "cloud" service, Evidence.com, to store all digital evidence. The service is authorized and certified under both state and federal regulations for the security and protection of confidential information, and is available only for official law enforcement purposes. Evidence is stored and saved for a limited time (one year or less) unless it is categorized as evidence in an actual crime or formal investigation. Then it is stored for a period of time consistent with all other evidence related to that incident/investigation.

### What training do UAS pilots undergo?

In addition to the training and study required to maintain a FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot License, all CVPD UAS Team members train regularly in a variety of locations and settings to ensure operational efficiency. All training is documented, and the records are maintained by CVPD and are subject to review by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

### Who has access to the video and photos?

Video and photos collected by UAS are stored for the purposes of conducting police investigations and subsequent prosecutions. Accordingly, videos and photos are generally accessible to police investigators for official use only. Like all police records, video and photos may also be subject to additional release under the same rules and restrictions as BWC Video and other items of evidence. Generally, UAS photos and video are considered part of the investigative record and are not available to the public under the California Public Records Act (CPRA) or Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). For more details, please refer to the Chula Vista Police Department Policy on Portable Audio/Video Recorders.

### How is my privacy protected?

The intent of the DFR program is to enhance the Police Department's response to emergency calls for service. As such, drones are used during an active response to an emergency or other call for police assistance. CVPD policy prohibits drone operators from intentionally recording or transmitting images of any location where a person would have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as private backyards or inside private buildings, except where authorized by a warrant issued by a judge or in emergency situations.

### What rules and regulations must CVPD's UAS pilots follow?

All CVPD UAS pilots are subject to FAA regulations related to airspace use, and all must have a valid Part 107 Remote Pilot License. UAS pilots are also subject to the Chula Vista Police Department policy on UAS operations, which is available on the CVPD website.

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# FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) - *continued*

### Why does CVPD use UAS rather than helicopters?

Helicopters and other manned aircraft (air support) are very expensive to operate. Currently, CVPD relies on the San Diego Police Department and the San Diego Sheriff's Department for air support. UAS can be used in a variety of ways that supplement mutual aid air support requests in a cost-effective and efficient manner, like the Drone as First Responder (DFR) aerial intelligence-led emergency response.

### What is Drone as First Responder (DFR) operations?

Drone as First Responder (DFR) operations is an innovative and transformative use of UAS developed and implemented by the Chula Vista Police Department and Motorola, a private UAS teleoperation company. DFR is the public safety Concept of Operations for the San Diego City IPP Team. The concept is to utilize a UAS to fly to any reported incident and arrive prior to first responders on the ground. The video feed from the UAS is viewed at the police department by a trained first responder (teleoperator or TO). The TO is able to operate the UAS remotely and communicate with field personnel via radio immediately. The TO is able to evaluate the scene and circumstances before those in the field arrive and provide necessary tactical information that help them stay safe and increase efficiency. The video feed is also immediately available to every officer in the field via a smart phone application. Officers and fire personnel can see for themselves what they are responding to. The ability to evaluate the resources needed, prepare the proper tactical response, and increase the safety of the first responders and the public is the intent of the project and the mission of Chula Vista Police Department.

### When do Chula Vista Police use UAS (drones)?

The Chula Vista Police Department uses UAS in a variety of circumstances such as documenting crime and accident scenes, searching for missing or wanted persons, fires, and evaluating damage after a major incident or natural disasters. These can happen anywhere in the City and the CVPD UAS Team will respond to those on an as-needed basis. The Chula Vista Police UAS Team is also part of an FAA initiative (UAS Integration Pilot Project, or IPP), that encourages public agencies and private companies to partner in using UAS in innovative ways to serve the community and evaluate the integration of UAS into the National Air Space (NAS). Since October 22, 2018 CVPD in partnership with CAPE (now Motorola) and other companies has been utilizing UAS to respond to emergency calls or reported incidents in the area around the police department building (roughly 1-mile radius). UAS are launched from various locations throughout the city and fly toward the scene of incident such as a crime in progress, serious accident, officer in need of assistance, or any other incident where having advanced knowledge of what is happening at the scene before police and fire first responders arrive may add to safety and efficiency. This program is called Drone as First Responder (DFR) Operations (see above).

### How do I ask a question or make a complaint about UAS in Chula Vista?

Anyone may email the UAS Team directly at UASTeam@ChulaVistaPD.org. Also anyone may make a service complaint to the Chula Vista Police Department in person, via phone (619) 691-5151, or fill out the complaint form here.

### Can foreign countries gain access to CVPD's drone data or information through a drone's built-in software?

No. Our drone data does not utilize the onboard software from the drone manufacturer. From the outset of our program, we have used an encrypted, US-based software program to bypass the drone manufacturer's systems. Our data is encrypted and is stored on US-based servers that meet federal requirements for confidential law enforcement databases.

### Does the Chula Vista Police Department own or share data with 3rd party companies?

The Chula Vista Police Department owns all of its data. The CVPD does not share or sell any of its data with any 3rd party companies. Our data is encrypted and is stored on US-based servers that meet federal requirements for confidential law enforcement databases. 3rd party companies cannot access our data without permission from the Chula Vista Police Department and, even then, only under strict limitations.

***For more FAQs related to UAS, visit https://www.faa.gov/uas/faqs/***

# Our Culture

- We embrace mutual respect for human life of all people.
- We reinforce progressive and transformative community policing strategies.
- We require our officers to intervene to prevent misconduct, and to report misconduct to superiors.
- Our leadership consistently reinforces compassionate and respectful interaction with our community.
- Our Chief speaks directly to our members in one-on-one interactions and frequent group communications to reinforce our shared vision.
- Our leadership and training personnel reinforce community expectations, policies and decision-making guidance through progressive training strategies.

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Connect with us!

*Find policies, deployments, media highlights and more at:*
***www.chulavistapd.org***

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