

Santa Clara County Office of the Sheriff
Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)
Annual Surveillance Report: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

1. Description of How the Technology Was Used

The purpose of the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS - commonly referred to as "drones" or "unmanned aircraft systems") is to provide a Deputy Sheriff with the ability to make observations from an overhead, aerial position and provide vital updates to first responders in a variety of crucial public safety missions. The Office of the Sheriff has not yet procured any UAS due to the pending Military Equipment policy approval, which is currently before the Board. UAS are defined as Category 1 equipment and require this additional approval before any procurement can take place.

2. Data Sharing with Outside Entities

The Office of the Sheriff has not shared any data with outside entities related to Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) as UAS procurement is pending additional required approvals.

3. Community Complaints or Concerns

Any community complaints regarding the use of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) are routed to the Internal Affairs Lieutenant for tracking and response. There were no community complaints or concerns expressed to the Office of the Sheriff regarding the use of UAS during this reporting period.

4. Non-Privileged Internal Audits / Policy Violations

All Office of the Sheriff staff are provided all Surveillance Use Policies via an internal web-based portal requiring annual review and attestation of acknowledgement completion. Unit supervisors are required to monitor and periodically audit the data obtained by the use of the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) to ensure compliance with the Surveillance Use Policy and other Sheriff's policies. Internal audits were not performed during this reporting period as the Office of the Sheriff has yet to procure any UAS at the time of this report.

5. Effectiveness in Achieving its Identified Purpose

The Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) have proven to be an effective tool to gather intelligence and provide tactical updates from an aerial perspective to units on the ground. The Office of the Sheriff considers this equipment vital and necessary for a variety of functions to include effective documenting crime scene, vehicle collision reconstruction, search and rescue operations, critical incident response, and tactical deployments.

6. Public Records Act Requests

The Office of the Sheriff has a process in place to track California Public Records Act (CPRA) requests where designated staff are assigned to receive and respond to each request. The Office of the Sheriff did not receive any California Public Records Act requests for the data from the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) during this reporting period.

7. Annual Costs

The procurement of the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) will be a one-time purchase with no recurring annual costs once required approvals are granted.