

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)
NUMBER 08)

28 April 2025

Unmanned Aircraft Systems Policy

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish standard procedures for the operation of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) on, over, or in VMI Property. This policy was created to limit UAS activity in order to protect the safety and privacy of VMI cadets, employees, contractors, and visitors, as well as to protect personal property.

2. DEFINITIONS

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle – An unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) (or uncrewed aerial vehicle, also known as a “drone”) is an aircraft without a human pilot on board.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems – UAVs are a component of a UAS, which include a UAV, a ground-based controller, and a system of communications between the two.

VMI Property – Any property owned, leased, or controlled by VMI.

3. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all VMI cadets, faculty and staff, employees, board members, contractors, and visitors to any property owned, leased, or controlled by VMI.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLICY

The Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Planning is responsible for the administration of this policy with the assistance of the VMI Chief of Police.

5. POLICY

The operation of any component of a UAS for any purpose on, over, or in VMI property is **strictly prohibited** unless and until the operator obtains written authorization from the VMI Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Planning at least two weeks prior to any such use. The Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Planning shall provide the Chief of Police a copy when any such authority has been granted. The Chief of Police and his or her designees are authorized to enforce this policy. Exceptions to this policy may be authorized only by the Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Planning in writing.

In operating a UAS for purposes of recording or transmitting visual images, operators must take all reasonable measures to avoid the invasion of areas normally considered private. Flights around heavily populated areas (e.g., stadiums, Parade Ground, etc.) are always unauthorized. All UAS operators are personally responsible for complying with all Federal Aviation Authority regulations, and federal, state, and local laws applying to the use of any component of a UAS. Such operators also are personally liable for any physical injury or property damage caused by any such use.

VMI staff may operate a UAS for marketing, filming, and promotion purposes. In-house work such as this will be coordinated with the Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Planning.

6. PROCEDURE

In order to comply with this policy, requests to operate any component of a UAS on, over, or in any VMI Property must be submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the requested operation through the 25Live Scheduling Software online request form via the link below. Events and/or circumstances that come up within two weeks requiring a drone request submission will be considered and processed accordingly. :

Commercial requests to operate a UAS on, over, or in any VMI property or facility must include a copy of the remote pilot in command's valid and unexpired remote pilot certificate, a certificate of insurance, and an outline of the proposed flight schedule and flight activity. In addition, commercial operators must agree to hold harmless, indemnify and defend VMI in the event of litigation that arises in connection with their flight operations on, over, or in any VMI property or facility.

Please complete and submit the following form via this link provided:

<https://www.vmi.edu/about/offices-a-z/facilities-management/drone-request/>

Operating Plans are to be submitted and shall include the following:

- Name/Names of Operator
- Contact Information (to include cell phone)
- Equipment to be used
- Dates and times (UAS may be operated in daylight only)
- Locations on Post
- All forms of data (including imagery) to be collected

After submitting the Drone Request online, an acknowledgement email will be sent confirming the information you submitted in your drone request. When the request completes the workflow process and a determination of approval or denial is made, a second email will be sent notifying you of your request's final status. The emails will come from 25Live.

If the Drone Request is approved, please print the approval and carry it during the requested airtime.

7. VIOLATIONS

Violations of federal, state, or local laws, or violations of applicable VMI policies may subject the operator to criminal or civil penalties and/or disciplinary action. Legal prohibitions regarding physical presence on VMI Property, including but not limited to trespassing and other legal action, also may be pursued against third parties that operate any component of a UAS in violation of this policy. A violation of this policy shall be considered unacceptable conduct subject to disciplinary actions pursuant to applicable cadet, staff, or faculty policies up to and including dismissal.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT:

Travis L. Homiak, '95
Colonel (Ret), USMC,
Chief of Staff

DIST: E, Cadets
OPR: COS