

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT, NEW YORK 10996

MAAS

25 July 2025

SUBJECT: West Point Policy Memorandum MR-25-02 Use of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) on West Point Military Installation

1. References.

- a. AR 95-2, Air Traffic Control, Airfield/Heliport, & Airspace Operations, 31 March 2016.
- b. AR 95-1, Flight Regulations, 22 March 2018.
- c. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 3121.01B, Standing Rules of Engagement/Standing Rules for the Use of Force for U.S. Forces, 13 June 2005.
- d. HQDA EXORD 093-22
- e. National Defense Authorization Act of 2023 HR 7776, Section 817
- f. Deputy Secretary of Defense Delegation of Authority Memo, June 2018
- g. Army Regulation 190-13, The Army Physical Security Program, 27 June 2019
- h. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2018 (PL 115-254) Subtitle B, 5 October 2018. 113-AR 600-20, Army Command Policy, para 2-5b (1), 24 July 2020
- i. Title 14 CFR Part 107, 02 December 2024
- j. USMA Social Media Policy, 8 October 2020
- k. ALARACT 080/2024 Notification and clarification to AR 95-1, 25 September 2021

2. Purpose. This memorandum establishes West Point policy for the management and use of nonofficial, non-tactical, and commercial small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) (remotely controlled model aircraft and drones) on West Point. For Official Use of sUAS, see paragraph 7.b. This policy rescinds USMA Policy MA-18-35

3. Scope. This policy memorandum applies to all personnel assigned, attached, residing, visiting, or under Operational Control (OPCON) of West Point and the confines of the West Point Military Installation, including its airspace

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4. Definitions. UAS is defined by statute as an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft (Public Law 112-95, Section 331(8)). An sUAS is a component of a UAS. sUAS group 1-2 (AR95-1, 22MAR18) are defined as unmanned aircraft weighing less than 55 pounds on takeoff, including everything that is on board or otherwise attached to the aircraft (Title 14 CFR Part 107, 2DEC24). Additionally, an sUAS is an unmanned aircraft and the associated equipment for the safe and efficient operation of that aircraft.

5. Guidance.

a. Use of sUAS within West Point is prohibited without prior approval from the Senior Commander or Senior Commander appointed designee. The West Point Senior Mission Commander may authorize sUAS for recreational, academic, research, and engineering purposes on a case-by-case or recurring basis. Each authorization will specify the scope of recreational use, including designated locations and times approved for flying. Operators will abide by FAA requirements (www.faa.gov/uas) and this policy letter. All sUAS must be on the approved BLUE UAS Cleared Drone list IAW FY 2020 NDAA Sec 848 and FY2023 NDAA Sec 817.

b. The West Point Senior Mission Commander can prohibit sUAS usage at any time. If the West Point Force Protection Condition (FPCON) elevates to FPCON CHARLIE or DELTA, use of all sUAS will terminate immediately and will not resume until reduction in FPCON or approval by the Senior Mission Commander. Installation policy on sUAS will be reviewed annually.

c. ALARACT 080/2024 clarification to AR 95-1 Ch. 9 states non-tactical missions such as Corps of Engineers dam inspection, Research and academic activities within the Army research laboratories; Engineering Command (RDECOM); Military Academies; or public affairs events are exempt from the qualifications, evaluations, and currency requirements of AR 95-1 dated 2018. West Point is responsible for safe operations and compliance with applicable Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) circulars.

d. West Point requires operators to follow FAA Guidelines governing unofficial (hobbyist) and commercial sUAS registration and operation. FAA registration requirements for hobbyist use of sUAS include: 1) weigh less than 55 pounds; 2) fly strictly for personal (non-business related) use; 3) not interfere with manned aircraft; and 4) coordinate with local airport management or air traffic control if within 5 miles of an airport. sUAS must be registered with the FAA (see <https://registermyuas.faa.gov>). Registration helps to ensure safety for the owner, personnel on the ground, and manned aircraft. It also enables the return of a sUAS should it be lost.

e. Operators must hold a Remote Pilot Certificate issued by the FAA. This certification requires passing the FAA Part 107 knowledge exam, which covers airspace regulations, weather, operational procedures, and emergency management. If the operators are not certified, then they cannot legally conduct drone operations. West

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Point falls under controlled airspace and must obtain FAA authorization for drone flights. Part 107 requires UAS to yield to manned aircraft, but real-time coordination is needed to prevent conflicts. Helicopters conducting low-level operations, confined area landings, and air assault training could be affected by drone flights if not properly coordinated. If drone operators lose communication or control, then there must be emergency protocols to prevent airspace conflicts. If drones are flying near drop zones (DZs), there is a serious risk to jumpers under canopy. Canopy entanglement could be a catastrophic issue. Even small drones present a hazard. Jump aircraft require clear flight paths and holding patterns, meaning drone operations could disrupt safe ingress and egress from a DZ.

f. sUAS operations cannot operate in conditions that would affect control or visibility of the drone. All sUAS operations must maintain cloud clearance of 500 feet below, 2,000 feet horizontally, and minimum visibility of three (3) statute miles. Maximum altitude requirements include: 400 feet Above Ground Level (AGL) unless near a structure, 400 feet above the structure. sUAS must yield right of way to manned aircraft at all times, must maintain visual line of sight (VLOS) unless granted a beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) waiver, and cannot operate over people unless meeting safety requirements (e.g., small drones that will not cause injury). sUAS flight-operated BVLOS need an FAA waiver. Night operations or over-people flights are not authorized without West Point Senior Mission Commander or designee approval, and additional FAA waivers are required. If this sUAS operation is frequent or ongoing, then a Restricted Operating Zone (ROZ) may be established. A ROZ could restrict helicopter training or parachute operations, depending on size, altitude, and duration. If a ROZ is necessary, then the entity requesting the ROZ must coordinate with USMA G3 Air and Air Traffic Control (ATC) to ensure the ROZ does not negatively impact military flight operations.

g. All sUAS accidents involving damage to property or injury to a person will immediately notify the Directorate of Emergency Services (DES) Duty Desk (845) 938-3333. All government non-tactical mission sUAS, including academics, will immediately notify the USMA Safety Office and chain of command to determine if Commanders Critical Information Requirement (CCIR) nine (9) must be initiated.

h. sUAS flights are only authorized during daylight hours (periods between morning and evening twilight, in which one would not need to use artificial light). An exception to flight times will go through USMA G3 utilizing USMA's sUAS flight request form NLT 5 days before the first flight. (see Enclosure 1)

i. Residents and organizations within an Army installation are prohibited from receiving commercial services originating outside an installation through sUAS.

j. Counter UAS operations are controlled through the USMA Force Protection, WP Garrison Force Protection, and the Department of Emergency Services.

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k. sUAS operators intending to take videos or photos must request permission from USMA Public Affairs Office (PAO), who will provide operators with the policy on restricted areas, facilities, and events to avoid. sUAS operators intending to post photos or videos from an sUAS flight on social media must seek permission from USMA PAO and allow USMA PAO to review photos/video for prohibited facilities or activities (Refer to USMA Social Media Policy dated 8 October 2020). All requests for taking aerial photographs and videos must be approved in advance by the USMA PAO.

l. USMA G3 Force Protection and USMA PAO are primarily responsible for the conduct of sUAS flights within the West Point Installation. sUAS may not operate over or take photos/video of areas listed below, without approval from USMA Force Protection and Public Affairs office:

- (1) Soldiers in formation or activities with large numbers of Soldiers/Cadets
- (2) Officially designated Mission Essential and Vulnerable Areas (MEVA)
- (3) Officially designated High Risk Targets (HRT)
- (4) Central Post Restricted Area (CPRA)
- (5) Post Housing
- (6) USMA Installation Access Control Points

6. Enforcement.

a. Unauthorized use of sUAS from within the installation may result in the loss of installation access privileges; potential forfeiture of any unauthorized recordings, photographs, or videos; adverse personnel action; and possible criminal prosecution under Federal or State law, as appropriate.

b. West Point Force Protection will place NO-UAS signs at locations per the Senior Commander's discretion. Installation law enforcement officials will refer incidents involving unauthorized sUAS flights controlled outside of the installation to local law enforcement.

c. All personnel will report suspicious sUAS activity to the DES duty Desk (845) 938-3333. IAW DoDI 2000.26, the event will be entered into eGuardian as a Suspicious Activity Report if warranted. The incident becomes a record activity on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's eGuardian system.

7. Process for gaining approval to operate sUAS on USMA and West Point.

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a. sUAS Planning Group will be scheduled and chaired through Deputy G3. The meeting will include representatives from USMA G3, 2nd AVN, Dean, Army West Point Athletic Department (AWPAD), United States Corps of Cadets (USCC) G3, and Garrison representation from Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization, and Security (DPTMS). The planning group's responsibilities include:

(1) Aligning USMA sUAS policy with Department of Defense, Army, and FAA regulations and guidance.

(2) Identifying adaptations and changes to USMA's sUAS policy.

(3) Reviewing the upcoming known sUAS flight request.

b. All flights will be requested by submitting the USMA sUAS Flight Request Form IAW with applicable timeline and operating area. Flights are listed on the weekly Helo-Ops / Flight Schedule and distributed in the weekly TASKORD managed by 2nd AVN Operations. Flights that are not listed on the weekly Helo-Ops / Flight Schedule and distributed in the weekly TASKORD will not be permitted to fly.

c. Recreational sUAS

(1) Register sUAS with the FAA.

(2) Request permission from the Command-designated Authority DPTMS to operate your recreational sUAS at Lake Fredrick through the USMA sUAS flight request form. Recreational use can be approved on a case-by-case or recurring basis. (see enclosures 1 and 2).

d. sUAS Operations for Academic, Engineer, Public Affairs, United States Military Academies sUAS Platforms (IAW paragraph 5.c of this policy) Utilizing Established sUAS Operating Areas (see Enclosure 2).

(1) The Lead Operator will notify the 2nd AVN via email or voice NLT three hours prior for deconfliction.

(2) If operating in the cantonment area (East of Route 9W), then the Lead Operator will notify MP Duty Desk NLT 10 minutes before the flight for installation situational awareness. If operating in the training area (West of Route 9W), refer to paragraph f for additional guidance.

(3) If operating in the cantonment area (East of Route 9W), then the Lead Operator will notify the 2nd AVN, and the MP duty desk within 15 minutes of post-flight. If operating in the training area (West of Route 9W), refer to paragraph f for guidance.

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e. Academic, Engineer, Public Affairs, Military Academies (to include Army West Point Athletic Department (AWPAD)) sUAS (IAW paragraph 5.c of this policy) Utilizing Non-pre-established sUAS Operating Areas.

(1) Submit the USMA sUAS Request Form to the USMA G3 CUOPS email NLT 5 working days before the flight. G3 will coordinate with G3 Force Protection and the 2nd AVN. USMA G3 will notify DPTMS of the scheduled flight.

(2) The Lead Operator will notify the 2nd AVN via email or voice NLT three hours prior for deconfliction.

(3) The Lead Operator will notify MP Duty Desk NLT 10 minutes before the flight for installation situational awareness.

(4) The Lead Operator will notify the 2nd AVN, and MP duty desk within 15 minutes of post-flight.

(5) AWPAD submits sUAS request flight areas and quarterly schedule to 2nd AVN and DPTMS for deconfliction and safety mitigation. AWPAD practice recordings are exempt from PAO and USMA Force Protection review.

f. sUAS Use in Areas Requiring Range Facility Management Information System (RFMIS) Reservations and Approval (West of Route 9W).

(1) DPTMS serves as the approver for all sUAS RFMIS requests in the training area. The requesting unit must provide DPTMS with the following information in their RFMIS request: 2nd Aviation Air Space deconfliction, FAA Compliance, and FAA airspace authorization. DPTMS range operations will ensure clearance of all Surface Danger Zones.

(2) The Lead Operator will notify 2nd AVN via email or voice NLT three hours prior for deconfliction.

(3) The Lead Operator will notify Range Control NLT 10 minutes before the flight.

(4) The Lead Operator will notify the 2nd AVN and Range Control duty desk within 15 minutes of post-flight.

g. Commercial use of sUAS on West Point.

(1) Prohibited without prior approval from the Senior Mission Commander designee, who may authorize the use of sUAS for commercial purposes within the installation on a case-by-case basis only.

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(2) Operators must comply with all requirements for commercial sUAS use found in:

(a) Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 107

(b) Army Regulation 95-1

(c) Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements at <http://www.faa.gov/uas>

(3) Submit the USMA sUAS Request Form NLT 10 days before the first flight to the USMA G3 CUOPS email. G3 will coordinate with G3 Force Protection and 2nd AVN and the route request to DPTMS for coordination and submission to the West Point Garrison Commander for approval.

(4) All commercial flight requests must receive written approval from the Senior Mission Commander designee.

(5) The Lead Operator will notify the 2nd AVN via email or voice NLT 3 hours prior for deconfliction.

(6) The Lead Operator will notify MP Duty Desk NLT 10 minutes before the flight for installation situational awareness.

(7) The Lead Operator will notify the 2nd AVN and MP duty desk within 15 minutes of post-flight.

(8) All commercial entities must comply with video and photography policies stated under the enforcement IAW of this policy.

h. Flight operations in containment structures (indoor, netted areas, etc.)

(1) Approved locations will follow the provisions described in this policy with the following modifications

(a) No coordination is required with 2nd AVN.

(b) Coordination is required with the containment structures aligned Building Commandant and the containment structures' Safety Officer.

(c) SUAS will be limited to electrically powered aircraft weighing 20lbs for vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) SUAS, and 5lbs for other types of electrically powered SUAS.


(d) All personnel in the flight environment will be participants and receive a safety brief.

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(e) Operators will verify that the containment structure is capable of containing the aircraft during all normal and emergency operational phases, as well as debris ejected from the aircraft for any reason (e.g., thrown rotor blade, tip weight, propeller, turbine disk, etc.) If the containment structure is not capable of containing ejected debris, then the operator will define a Safety Standoff Distance (SSD) or additional protective barrier to be employed during operation.

(f) The operator shall verify that the containment structure has a method to control ingress and egress of personnel during operations.

8. Point of Contact for this policy is USMA G3 SGM Cooper at 845-938-4465 or the USMA AT/FP Officer Matt Cassidy at 845-938-3650.



STEVEN W. GILLAND
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3 Encls

1. Flight Request Form 1
2. Operating Areas
3. CST Air Space Deconfliction (For Record)
4. Line of Demarcation