I. Title

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (Drones)

II. Policy

A. Audience: All employees, faculty, contract workers, volunteers, visitors, and students of University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB Health) hospitals and clinics.

B. Purpose: To prevent damage to property and potential injury to staff and the public that results from the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones).

C. Policy Statement: The use of drones on the UTMB campus by students, faculty, staff, contract workers, volunteers, or visitors for personal or recreational use is strictly prohibited. Federal regulations, along with safety, security, and privacy issues are among the many reasons drone use is not allowed on campus.

Drones may only be used for UTMB institutional purposes, upon written approval (permit) by Environmental, Health, and Safety (EH&S) and campus police. Approval is granted based on operational risk, benefits to UTMB, application and project specifications, as well as compliance with all applicable Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination for employees; a termination of employment relationship in the case of contractors or consultants; or suspension or expulsion in the case of a student. Additionally, individuals may be subject to loss of access privileges and civil and/or criminal prosecution.

III. Responsibility

A. It is the responsibility of all UTMB faculty, staff, students, contract workers, volunteers, and visitors to adhere to this policy, ensuring drones are not utilized on campus interfering with safety and day-to-day activities on campus.

B. Any person operating a drone on UTMB’s campus is personally responsible for complying with FAA regulations, state and federal laws and UTMB policies, including FAA requirements that owners of drones register their drone on the FAA website.

C. UTMB will register any drones operating commercially or for reasons other than recreation or hobby, on behalf of the institution.

IV. Process for Requesting Permit from UTMB

A. Any individual requesting permission to operate a drone on UTMB’s campus must obtain written approval from EHS and campus police prior to use.
B. Any commercial operator use of a drone must first be issued a permit from the FAA, and evidence of this permit must be provided to EH&S when requesting authorization. Approval may be requested by contacting EH&S at (409) 747-0515.

C. Guidelines for Use of Permitted Drone on Campus
Individuals who are permitted by UTMB to operate drones in the airspace above UTMB’s campus must abide by the following guidelines:
1. Drones may not be operated in any way that would create a public safety hazard, an undue hazard to property or privacy, or in such a way that unduly affects the environment of individuals on UTMB’s campus.
2. Drones must be under the control of the operator at all times, remain within the sight of the operator, and flown only during daylight hours.
3. Drones may not be operated above open-air events, inside buildings, or above thoroughfares.

V. Definitions
Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (Drone) – an unmanned aircraft system with or without camera attachments.

VI. Relevant Federal and State Statutes
FAA Notice JO 7210.891: Unmanned Aircraft Operations in National Airspace System
General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety & Health Act

VII. Relevant System Policies and Procedures
UT System Policy UTS174: Environmental Health and Safety

VIII. Related UTMB Policies and Procedures
None

IX. Additional References
None

X. Dates Approved or Amended

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XI. Contact Information
Environmental Health & Safety
409-772-4191