



**Institutional Handbook of Operating Procedures**  
**Policy 08.1.17**

Section: Health, Safety, and Security	Responsible Vice President: Vice President, Business Operations & Facilities
Subject: Environmental Health & Safety	Responsible Entity: Environmental Health & Safety

**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. Exclusion: This policy does not apply to the use of drones weighing less than 0.55 lbs (250 grams) when operated within a student’s private space in on-campus student housing. Drones cannot be operated in public spaces in student housing.
- D. 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). 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. Upon EH&S approval, UTMB Police is notified of the approved permit. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles will be considered a controlled asset requiring a UTMB asset tag. Obtain the asset tag from Asset Management.

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.

All photos and videos taken by drones operating on or above UTMB property are the property of UTMB Health and are not to be distributed, sold, or reproduced without the express written permission of UTMB Health.

UTMB owned drones are considered a controlled asset requiring a UTMB asset tag which should be obtained from Asset Management.

**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 negatively 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.
4. Public Safety Exception: Drones operated by a law enforcement agency or fire department in response to an active emergency are exempt from the permitting requirements of this policy. In these instances, UTMB Police must be notified of the use of the drone prior to use. Scheduled drills and exercises using a drone would still require advanced EH&S approval.

**V. Definitions**

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

**VI. Relevant Federal and State Statutes**

- [Code of Federal Regulations §107](#)
- [FAA Notice 7200.23A: Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\) General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety & Health Act](#)
- [Texas Government Code, Chapter 423 – Use of Unmanned Aircraft](#)

**VII. Relevant System Policies and Procedures**

[UT System Policy UTS174: Environmental Health and Safety](#)

**VIII. Dates Approved or Amended**

<i>Originated: 08/16/16</i>	
<i>Reviewed with Changes</i>	<i>Reviewed without Changes</i>
07/24/2019	

**IX. Contact Information**  
Environmental Health & Safety  
409-747-0515