Drone (UAV/UAS) Operations Policy

Document Number: EHS-0014 **Date Published(sys):** 9/16/2025

General Description

Policy Summary:

To ensure compliance with FAA regulations and protect safety and privacy on campus, all drone operations on or over Trinity University property must be registered, reviewed, and approved through the Department of Environmental Health & Safety (EHS). This includes operations conducted by employees, students, and third-party contractors. Faculty and staff conducting drone operations for university-related business must meet FAA commercial use requirements.

Purpose:

To define drone usage requirements and approval processes, mitigate potential safety risks, protect individual privacy, and ensure compliance with federal, state, and local regulations.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Trinity University employees, students, and contractors who intend to operate drones (UAVs/UASs) on University-owned or controlled property, or at University-sponsored events held elsewhere

Exceptions:

None.

Responsible Department:

Environmental Health & Safety

Policy Content

General Operation Requirements

- All drone operations must be approved by EHS at least 15 business days in advance via the Drone Request Form.
- All operators must comply with FAA regulations, applicable state and local law, and University policy..

- All operations must maintain a clear line of sight and generally occur during daylight hours. Operations over residential areas or large crowds require special approval and must follow enhanced safety protocols. Use during events on University premises or during University sanctioned activities off University premises is permitted only with prior authorization from EHS.

Registration and FAA Compliance

- Drones weighing over 55 lbs must be registered with the FAA.
- Commercial use requires:
    - FAA Remote Pilot Certification (Part 107 license)
        - Aeronautical Knowledge Test: successful completion of the "Unmanned Aircraft General – Small (UAG)" knowledge test.
        - Drone Registration
    - Special Airworthiness Certificate (if applicable)
    - Operator to be 16+ years old

Faculty, Staff, and Student Use

- Faculty andstaff drone use related to their employment is considered commercial use.
- Students may operate drones for coursework only under direct faculty supervision.
- Drone operations must not disrupt campus operations or pose safety hazards.

Drone operations for research or sponsored projects must follow funding agency requirements to ensure legal compliance.

Third-Party Contractor Use

- Contractors must complete:
    - Drone Request Form
    - Contractor/Third-Party Release and Indemnification Form
- Risk Management must be consulted for liability and insurance compliance.

Operating Rules

- Drones:
    - May not fly 400 feet above ground level (AGL), or within five miles of an airport without proper authorization.
    - May not fly above crowds, public venues, or campus housing.
    - May not be operated indoors or from/over thoroughfares without prior written approval.
    - Must remain within visual line of sight.

    - Must operate during daylight hours unless approved for night operations under FAA rules.
    - Must not exceed 100 mph.
- Drones and equipment may not involve entities restricted by U.S. export laws, including

Insurance & Privacy

- Trinity University assumes no liability for damage, injury, or loss resulting from UAS/drone use in violation of this policy. Operators bear full legal and financial responsibility for any resulting property damage, personal injury, or other losses.

Performance Evaluation

Consequences of Policy Violation:

- Failure to follow this policy may result in:
    - Suspension of the drone use privileges
    - Disciplinary action up to termination or expulsion
    - Civil or criminal penalties under FAA guidelines, state, or local laws, and/or University policy.

Terms & Definitions

Terms and Definitions:

Term:	Definition:
Drone / UAV / UAS	Any aircraft operated without direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft, including those used for educational, recreational, or commercial purposes.
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration, which governs U.S. airspace.
Commercial Use	Any drone use by university faculty or staff as part of employment duties or for institutional business.
Hobbyist Use	Personal or educational use where no compensation is involved.

Attachments

Contractor/Third Party Release and Indemnification

Related Documents

Related Content:

FAA Drone Registration
FAA Rules for Small UAS
Drone Request Form

Revision Management

Revision History Log:

Revision #:	Date:	Recorded By:
v3.0	7/29/2025 8:59 AM	Pamela Mota
v2.0	1/31/2023 2:22 PM	Gary Logan
v1.0	7/31/2019 4:53 PM	Jennifer Gilmore Adamo

Vice President Approval:

Name:	Title:
Mark Detterick	Vice President for Finance and Administration