



## U.S. Department of Justice

Office of the Deputy Attorney General

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Washington, D.C. 20530

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### **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE SUMMARY OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (UAS) OPERATIONS DURING FISCAL YEAR 2020**

The February 15, 2015, *Presidential Memorandum on Promoting Economic Competitiveness While Safeguarding Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties in Domestic Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems* (the “2015 Presidential Memorandum”) requires Federal agencies that use UAS to: 1) “provide notice to the public regarding where the agency’s UAS are authorized to operate in the [National Airspace System]”; 2) “keep the public informed about the agency’s UAS program as well as changes that would significantly affect privacy, civil rights, or civil liberties”; and 3) “[publish], on an annual basis, a general summary of the agency’s UAS operations during the previous fiscal year, to include a brief description of types or categories of missions flown, and the number of times the agency provided assistance to other agencies, or to State, local, tribal, or territorial governments.”<sup>1</sup>

Once published in the Department’s Office of Information Policy Freedom of Information Act Library, this report satisfies the requirements of the 2015 Presidential Memorandum for operations conducted during Fiscal Year 2020 (FY2020), without revealing information reasonably expected to compromise national security or law enforcement activities.

The Department’s five law enforcement operational components, *i.e.*, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS), operate UAS to accomplish their assigned law enforcement and national security missions. Based on the nationwide jurisdiction of the Department’s law enforcement components, these UAS operations are authorized to occur throughout the United States and its territories. Pursuant to the Department’s 2019 UAS Policy, components may only use UAS in connection with properly authorized investigations and activities,<sup>2</sup> and the Department complies with all controlling legal requirements of the jurisdiction when operating UAS, including required coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration. No other Department components operated UAS to accomplish their missions during FY2020.

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum on Promoting Economic Competitiveness While Safeguarding Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties in Domestic Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems, 80 Fed. Reg. 9355, §1(d)(iii) (Feb. 15, 2015), *available at* <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2015-02-20/pdf/2015-03727.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Justice 2019 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Policy, Office of Legal Policy website, *available at* <https://www.justice.gov/jm/9-95000-unmanned-aircraft-systems-uas#9-95.100>.

There were no changes to Department use of UAS during FY2020 that would significantly affect privacy, civil rights, or civil liberties. As required by the Department's 2019 UAS Policy, Senior Component Officials for Privacy continue to assess new UAS technology prior to employment, ensure their components complete all privacy documentation, and conduct annual privacy reviews of component use of UAS.

The Department's five law enforcement operational components conducted 248 UAS deployments<sup>3</sup> during FY2020 in support of Department of Justice operations. All totaled, the components recorded approximately 172 hours and 59 minutes of flight time.

The general types or categories of missions flown include the following: authorized investigations, fugitive apprehension, communications support, search and rescue, site survey, counter-UAS testing and training, crime scene examination, mapping, reconnaissance of remote geographical areas, force protection and officer safety during service of warrants, demonstration flights, UAS and Counter-UAS testing and training, and production of component training videos.

The Department provided UAS assistance to other Federal agencies and to State, local, tribal, or territorial governments during FY2020, a total of five (5) UAS deployments for a total flight time of approximately 14 hours and 8 minutes.

The Department received UAS assistance from non-DOJ Federal agencies and from State, local, tribal, or territorial governments during FY2020, a total of 88 UAS deployments for a total flight time of approximately 85 hours and 4 minutes.

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<sup>3</sup> A "UAS deployment" is the sending and/or tasking of a UAS and operator(s) by a component in support of an official duty of that component and may involve one or more flights, usually as a result of limited battery life. If a UAS is deployed but not ultimately used for operations, that deployment is still reported to the Department but is not included in this number. Further, this number does not include training and non-operational administrative UAS activities.