

## Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)

7768

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Privately owned (employee owned) Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS or Drones) regardless of size shall **not** be utilized at any time while on duty, or in, on, or around State owned / controlled property, equipment, aircraft, or in conjunction with any State business, including incidents. The Department will maintain a Zero tolerance policy to the above due to potential safety, damage, loss/recovery, and liability issues.

Unmanned Aerial Systems operating in the national airspace system are considered by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as aircraft, regardless of size. Accordingly, any use of UAS technology (including through agreements), acquisition, contracting or leasing of UAS must be approved by the Director.

**Any** CAL FIRE leased, contracted, or owned UAS will require a Certificate of Authorization (COA) from the FAA before operating within the national airspace system. The COA request process is extensive and includes requirements similar to manned aircraft in terms of pilot training and currency, airworthiness approval, avionics, and operational restrictions. In certain extenuating circumstances the Director may approve UAS use absent a COA per FAA "Interim Operational Guidance 08-01 Sec. 4.1"

UAS operated by the National Guard, Military, or other cooperators for the CAL FIRE mission are subject to the approval requirements in [8100 HB Procedure 390](#) which requires Executive approval.

The Department recognizes the high potential for UAS operations and the importance of this technology. Since this is a new program, CAL FIRE intends to proceed cautiously.

## Unauthorized UAS Use Reporting

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Any observation of potentially unauthorized UAS use shall immediately be reported through the appropriate chain of command. If at all possible, identification of size, type, location, and source of the UAS should be determined and reported.

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