

	MARICOPA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE POLICY AND PROCEDURES	
	Subject AVIATION OPERATIONS	Policy Number EJ-2
		Effective Date 11-30-22
Related Information CP-4, <i>Emergency and Pursuit Driving</i> EJ-1, <i>Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program</i> GA-3, <i>Operations Manual Format</i> GD-21, <i>Business Travel and Travel Expenses</i> GH-2, <i>Internal Investigations</i>	Supersedes EJ-2 (12-06-13)	

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Office Policy is to establish guidelines and procedures to implement effective safety practices for the Aviation Services Division (ASD) when deploying rotorcraft and fixed-wing aircrafts for air support requests.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Office to supplement its mission to provide protection of life and property with the use of aircraft. The Office maintains several aircraft whose primary function is to provide assistance to all areas of the Office and other agencies.

DEFINITIONS

Aviation Services Division (ASD): The division that encompasses all aspects of the Office fixed-wing and rotorcraft use.

Aviation Services Division Operations Manual: Rules and guidelines set forth for the safe operation of division aircraft.

Chief Pilot (CP): A supervisory pilot responsible for specific duties within the Aviation Services Division (ASD).

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA): An agency of the United States Department of Transportation that sets standards for the airworthiness of civilian aircraft, inspects and licenses aircraft, regulates civilian and military air traffic through air traffic control centers, investigates air accidents and in response, may establish new aviation rules.

Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs): Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations governing all aspects of aviation operations, standards, and maintenance.

Fixed-Wing: Aircraft that derive lift from the motion of air over aerodynamically designed surfaces attached permanently and rigidly to the fuselage; commonly referred to as an airplane.

Pilot in Command (PIC): The person who has final authority and responsibility for the operation and safety of the flight, regardless of the rank of another person on board, designated as PIC before or during the flight, and holds the appropriate category, class, and type rating if appropriate, for the conduct of the flight.

Public Use Aircraft: A term used by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to identify aircraft used for government purposes, not for commercial use.

Rotorcraft: Aircraft that derive lift by rotating wings or blades turning on vertical axes through power supplied by an engine, commonly referred to as a helicopter.

Safety Management System (SMS): Integration of modern risk management and safety assurance concepts into a repeatable, proactive system meant to promote aviation and workplace safety.

Tactical Flight Officer (TFO): The individual responsible for communications and equipment outside of the Pilot in Command (PIC) aviation responsibilities, who must have the ability to safely operate aircraft in an emergency situation, such as PIC incapacitation.

PROCEDURES

1. **Regulations:** Although Office rotorcraft and fixed-wing aircrafts are legally designated as public aircraft under current federal regulations, Office aircrafts shall not routinely operate under this designation to avoid or bypass Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR).
 - A. Federal regulations regarding maintenance, pilot qualifications, and responsibilities shall apply at all times.
 - B. Operational exceptions under Public Use Aircraft provisions shall be made with approval of the Chief Pilot (CP) and Division Commander or designee, or in emergency situations where circumstances clearly dictate the need for the exception, by the Pilot in Command (PIC).
 - C. Designated Office personnel shall meet or exceed aircraft safety considerations, as specified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the Department of Defense (DOD).
 - D. Employees and volunteers working in the Aviation Services Division (ASD) shall promote the Safety Management System (SMS) as follows:
 1. Ensure the safety of Office personnel and others on-board Office aircraft, as well as the safe operation of the aircraft;
 2. Provide current and updated aviation industry standards training to ASD personnel; and
 3. Provide an annual review of the ASD Operations Manual, as specified in Office Policy GA-3, *Operations Manual Format*.
2. **Requests for Rotorcraft Air Support:** Rotorcraft functions and responses to calls for service shall be based on availability, the PIC's and rotorcraft capabilities, the nature of the request, and flight conditions. Circumstances justifying a request for air support may include vehicle pursuits, public disorders requiring reconnaissance, searches for suspects and missing persons, location of vehicles, illumination of dark areas at night, participation in search and rescue operations, educational, and public relations functions.
 - A. The flight crew has the ultimate responsibility for the prioritization of requests for assistance. Requests for emergency air support shall be made through the Communications Division.
 - B. Whenever possible, the flight crew shall respond to calls for assistance when requested by a supervisor, the Communications Division, or other law enforcement agencies.

- C. When a request for air support to assist patrol is made, the law enforcement agencies first line supervisor shall advise the Communications Division of the nature of the request. The Communications Division shall contact the on-duty flight crew and advise them of the situation.
 - D. Requests for air support within the boundaries of Maricopa County involving a coordinated search and rescue mission shall be organized through the Search and Rescue Coordinator or the agency responsible for the mission. Approval should be obtained through the CP or the immediate ASD Supervisor and notification through the Communications Division.
 - E. Requests for air support outside the boundaries of Maricopa County involving a coordinated search and rescue mission, shall be approved by the ASD flight supervisor, ASD Commander or designee. This does not prohibit the immediate response in the preservation of life or property but provides direction on timely notification and approval of operations.
 - F. In advance requests for air support, may be made and directed to the ASD flight supervisor, or designee, for considerations. In advance requests from Office personnel may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Surveillance or interdiction operations;
 - 2. Specialized area patrols;
 - 3. Photographic missions;
 - 4. Search and rescue operations or training;
 - 5. Assistance to tactical operations; and
 - 6. Educational and public relations functions.
 - G. When Office aircraft are operated within a specific designated patrol area, special attention shall be given to schools, parks, shopping centers, and other locations identified as high crime areas.
 - H. When a flight crew is not on duty and air support is requested, the Communications Division shall contact the CP, an ASD supervisor, or the ASD Commander or designee and advise them of the situation. The ASD supervisor will either approve or deny the request. If approved, the ASD supervisor shall direct the mission to the scheduled on-call flight crew. The flight crew is subject to call out at any time during its on-call rotation to support active searches and relieve crews. Each flight crew is required to be available during its scheduled on-call rotation.
3. **Requests for Fixed-Wing Air Support:** Requests for fixed-wing air support shall be directed to the ASD flight supervisor and scheduled, as available, with the approval of the ASD Commander or designee. Missions, for which this unit is available, include but are not limited to:
- A. Expedient or exigent transportation of personnel for law enforcement purposes;
 - B. Surveillance or interdiction mission;
 - C. Specialized area patrols;
 - D. Photographic missions;
 - E. Search and rescue mission or training;

- F. Educational and public relations functions; and
 - G. Extradition missions. The ASD CP shall coordinate extradition missions and schedule available fixed-wing aircraft and personnel with the extradition's coordinator. Missions involving the extradition of prisoners, by means of ASD fixed-wing aircraft, shall follow procedures as specified in Office Policy GD-21, *Business Travel and Travel Expenses*.
4. **Restricted Maneuvers:** The normal operation of Office aircraft during missions such as search and rescue missions, and tactical team insertions, requires highly technical flight maneuvers.
- A. Flying under utility lines is restricted, except where specifically authorized by the CP.
 - B. Practice power-off maneuvers in rotorcraft are prohibited without prior approval from the CP and coordinated with the ASD Commander or designee, with the exception of scheduled training and maintenance flights.
 - C. Instances of restricted flight maneuvers shall be reported to the ASD Commander or designee for review. Action taken shall be reported to the bureau chief and documented in BlueTeam.
5. **Comments or Concerns From Members of the Public:** Comments or concerns from members of the public regarding aviation operations may be directed to the ASD flight supervisor. All complaints from members of the public shall be addressed, as specified in Office Policy GH-2, *Internal Investigation*.
6. **Operational Decisions:** Except where specifically stated in this Office Policy and the ASD Operations Manual, the PIC of any Office aircraft shall be the sole person in charge of its operational use, and their decisions shall be final. Only pilots and qualified TFOs, meeting the requirements stated in the ASD Operations Manual, shall be allowed to operate the flight controls and other equipment of the aircraft. Passengers, other than the flight crew, may ride in Office aircraft only when permission is received from the ASD Commander or designee, except in exigent circumstances where time is critical to the mission and permission cannot be obtained in a timely manner.
7. **Relay of Information During Vehicle Pursuits:**
- A. During a vehicle pursuit, the following information shall be relayed by the Communications Division, to the flight crew:
 - 1. Description of the suspect vehicle;
 - 2. Current pursuit location, speed, and direction of travel;
 - 3. Reason for the pursuit;
 - 4. Potential for violence and weapons, if known;
 - 5. Whether any other law enforcement agency is involved in the pursuit; and
 - 6. Any other aircraft in the immediate vicinity including, but not limited to, the media, military, or civilian.
 - B. When visual contact is made with the suspect vehicle, the flight crew shall notify the Communications Division and ground units and become the advising unit, as specified in Office Policy CP-4, *Emergency and Pursuit Driving*. Whenever possible, the flight crew will keep the

Communications Division advised regarding the direction of travel and the actions of the suspect vehicle.

8. **Multi-Aircraft Coordination:** Where multiple aircraft operate in proximity to Office aircraft, Office flight crews will establish direct communication with each flight crew and coordinate operational responsibilities to promote safe and efficient use of aviation resources. Office flight crews shall establish command and control over flight operations occurring in locations when the Office is the primary law enforcement agency.
9. **Ground Safety Rules and Precautions:** Ground safety rules and personal precautions shall be observed while an aircraft is on the ground. Non-emergency personnel and spectators will be directed away from an aircraft. Personnel will not approach an aircraft until signaled to do so by the flight crew.
 - A. Rotorcraft
 1. The rotorcraft shall always be approached from the front.
 2. When moving from one side of a rotorcraft to the other, personnel shall always cross in front of the rotorcraft.
 3. Personnel shall never go near the tail rotor of a rotorcraft. When requested by the flight crew, Office personnel may assist as a tail rotor guard by positioning themselves just outside the landing zone at the rear of the aircraft to help prevent an aviation accident or incident.
 4. Rotorcraft doors and hatches shall be opened and closed by flight crew members only.
 5. When approaching or leaving a rotorcraft, persons will keep their head down and walk in a crouched position. Awareness of terrain is critical when leaving or exiting rotorcraft, extreme caution should be taken when the rotorcraft is operating in a hilly or mountainous terrain so as not to walk into a rotor blade.
 6. Persons carrying items should not approach the rotorcraft unless assisted by the flight crew.
 7. There shall be no smoking or open flame within 65 feet of a rotorcraft during operations.
 8. All head gear will be removed prior to approaching the rotorcraft.
 - B. Fixed-Wing Aircraft
 1. Fixed-wing aircraft will be approached with only the direction and guidance of fixed-wing personnel.
 2. Boarding and disembarking of ASD fixed-wing aircraft will take place with observation, assistance, and direction from ASD personnel, as specified in the ASD Operations Manual.
10. **Safety Measures and Training:**
 - A. The SMS is a complete safety application intended for members participating within the ASD and is part of the ASD Operations Manual.
 - B. SMS is an integration of modern safety risk management and safety assurance concepts into repeatable, proactive systems, meant to promote overall safety in the workplace.
 - C. The ASD Operations Manual specifies the necessary training which includes, but is not limited to:

1. Biennial aircraft manufacturer flight and safety training for pilots;
 2. At least biennial pilot and personnel training for mountain rescue insertions;
 3. Annual pilot emergency procedures in each type aircraft; and
 4. Annual tactical and swift water training.
- D. The CP shall review FAA and FARs and communicate the up-to-date standards to the ASD Commander or designee.
- E. Safety training for essential aviation maintenance and operational equipment shall be conducted and maintained biennially with personnel, and documented, as specified in the ASD Operations Manual.
- F. The ASD CP shall ensure pilots are in compliance with FARs. Compliance shall be documented and maintained through the ASD Digital Air Ware Program to ensure certifications are recorded and provided annually to the division commander or designee of ASD and Maricopa County Risk Management. The report shall include:
1. Insurance compliance, in accordance with Maricopa County Risk Management guidelines; and
 2. FAA pilot certification.
11. **Unmanned Aircraft:** Office personnel use and deployment of unmanned aircraft for designated missions are conducted in accordance with the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Rule (Part 107), or other appropriate Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) authorized and applicable rules and shall follow procedures, as specified in Office Policy EJ-1, *Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program*.