

Frequently Asked Questions: Drone Operation for Public Works



This set of FAQs has been developed primarily for employees of the City of Eugene's Public Works Department. Please contact any listed representative for more information.

I'm interested in operating a drone at work. How do I get started?

To fly a drone for the City of Eugene there are 3 main requirements:

1. Obtain Approval from your Division Manager.
2. Pass FAA's knowledge test to become a Certified Drone Pilot (more on the process for certification below).
3. Demonstrate to a current operator that you can operate a drone safely.

How are drones currently used at the City of Eugene?

Three City of Eugene departments have adopted policies allowing qualified employees to use drones – Eugene-Springfield Fire, Eugene Police, and Public Works – and each department has specific uses for drones.

This far-reaching technology may be used for, but is not limited to:

- Obtaining images and video for outreach
- Enhancing situational awareness during emergency response
- Inspecting, monitoring, and reporting on facilities, assets, infrastructure and natural resources
- Enhancing services provided to the community

I understand drone operators are required to follow a lot of rules. Can you explain some of that?

There are some limitations to consider for public safety purposes and to maintain compliance with applicable regulations. For example, drone operators are required to always maintain sight of the drone, drones may not be flown above people, and drones may not be flown higher than 400 feet above ground, with some exceptions. These are just a few.

All drone use in the US is regulated by the FAA under what is known as “Part 107.” This is a set of Federal rules also known as “Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 107,” and you will learn everything you need to operate a drone in compliance of regulations by studying for your knowledge test.

In addition, the City of Eugene has an Operations Manual, and drone operators must follow established policies that have been developed specifically for each department’s operational needs. Department Policies can be viewed at www.eugene.gov/drones.

How do I obtain a Part 107 certification?

The FAA requires that you pass a 60-question, multiple-choice Knowledge Test to qualify for Remote Pilot Certification. Some of the material presented in the exam on National Airspace, weather, etc. may be unfamiliar, so advance studying will be required. Many people have found that 20-30 hours of study time is adequate. The time you spend studying is an important consideration, and the cost of FAA’s exam is \$150, so it is best to make arrangements with your supervisor in advance.

What options exist for training?

Support for training varies among departments, and any current drone operators will be able to discuss this with you. Public Works maintains a list of relevant study materials available at no cost, and you may have the option to pay for one of several existing online courses with your supervisor’s approval.

After you obtain your Part 107 Certificate, new PW drone operators will be required to spend up to four hours with a current operator to demonstrate knowledge of safe flying practices and operational proficiency. Once operational, drone operators are required to meet a few basic annual training requirements.

What equipment is available for use?

Public Works owns a [DJI Phantom 4 Pro](#). This can be considered shared equipment and is available for use by Part 107 certificated employees of PW. Each operator is required to use their own City-issued iPad or other device to be paired with the controller. Internal policy requires that City-owned equipment must be used for all drone work conducted by employees.

Where can I find more information?

- Contacts for each participating Department are listed at www.eugene-or.gov/drones. Anyone listed here can discuss drone-related questions with you.
- Part 107 summary: https://www.faa.gov/uas/media/part_107_summary.pdf
- Regulatory information can be found at <https://www.faa.gov/uas/>. Refer to information specific to “Certificated Remote Pilot or Commercial Operator” at https://www.faa.gov/uas/commercial_operators/.
- Follow this link to learn more about FAA’s process for Part 107 certification: https://www.faa.gov/uas/commercial_operators/become_a_drone_pilot/.