Launch / Recovery Procedures:

The launch and recovery operation is accomplished by an External Pilot (EP) manually/visually operating the aircraft from a portable Flight Control Box (FCB). EP control is maintained on the aircraft throughout the closed traffic pattern flight maneuver, attaining the approved standard traffic pattern altitude and controlling the aircraft during the final approach maneuver to touchdown on the landing runway at least 1000 feet long and 50 feet wide at sea level and use the aircraft tail-hook to complete a rolling arrested recovery to a full stop.

An aircraft mission that requires departing the launch area is accomplished by an EP manually operating the aircraft from a portable FCB. EP control is maintained until the aircraft attains 2000 feet above ground level. At this time, control is then transferred from the EP control to the Aerial Vehicle Operator (AVO) within the One System Ground Control Station (OSGCS). Internally, an AVO, maintains control of the aircraft, while a Mission Payload Operator (MPO) operates the payload/camera controls during the conduct of flight operations. At the end of the mission, the aircraft is returned to the recovery site and the controlling AVO in the OSGCS transfers control of the aircraft to the recovery External Pilot and subsequent landing.