Checklist for Tethered Public Safety 49 USC § 44806 Operations

(Public Safety Use of Actively Tethered UAS – Section 926 of the FAA's 2024 Reauthorization Act)

☑ **The organization qualifies as a public safety organization as defined in 49 USC § 44806(e).** "'Public safety organization' means an entity that primarily engages in activities related to the safety and well-being of the general public, including law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services, and other organizations that protect and serve the public in matters of safety and security."

☑ **The UAS is registered with the FAA and legibly marked with the registration number on the outside.** All drones flown by public safety, irrespective of weight, must be registered with the FAA. Registration can be done at https://www.faa.gov/uas/getting_started/register_drone/ (49 USC §§ 44101-44103)(14 CFR § 48.15)

☑ **The UAS transmits Remote ID (RID), and the drone registration information with the FAA has been updated with the RID serial number.** All drones operated under the statute must comply with 14 CFR part 89 "Remote ID of UAS". See this link to find a list of FAA accepted Remote ID equipped drones or Remote ID broadcast modules https://uasdoc.faa.gov/listDocs.

☑ **The sUA**

- weighs 55 pounds or less, including payload but not including the tether;
- is physically attached to a ground station with a taut, appropriately load-rated tether that provides continuous power to the unmanned aircraft and is unlikely to be separated from the unmanned aircraft;
- is controlled and retrieved by such ground station through physical manipulation of the tether;
- is able to maintain safe flight control in the event of a power or flight control failure during flight; and
- is programmed to initiate a controlled landing in the event of a tether separation. (49 USC § 44801(1))

☑ **The sUA operation**

- will remain in visual line of sight at all times of the designated Remote Pilot in Command;
- will yield the right of way and not interfere with any other aircraft at all times during the operation; and
- will not to be operated directly over non-participating persons (this means anyone who is present but not directly involved with the operation of the UAS itself). (49 USC § 44806(c)(1)(B)-(D))

☑ **The UAS altitude complies with the operational altitudes of 49 USC 44806 and airspace rules of 14 CFR.** The sUA must be operated:

- no higher than 150 feet above ground level (AGL) within class B, C, D, E, or G airspace, but not at a greater altitude than the ceiling depicted on the UAS Facility Maps https://faa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=9c2e4406710048e19806ebf6a06754ad;
- within zero-grid airspaces as depicted on such UAS Facility Maps, only if operated in life-saving or emergency situations and with prior notification to the FAA Systems Operations Support Center (SOSC) in a manner determined by the FAA; or
- above 150' AGL within class B, C, D, E, or G airspace only with prior authorization from the FAA. (49 USC § 44806(c)(1)(A)(i)-(iii))
  - While tethered operations under Part 107 are permitted over 150' AGL, operations conducted under this statute are limited to a maximum of 150' unless otherwise authorized by the FAA.

- Additionally, operations in special use airspace—for example, prohibited areas, restricted areas, and warning areas where certain limitations are imposed on aircraft operations or where activities are confined—require further coordination with the FAA.
- **Do not operate above the UASFM grid altitude or above 150' in any airspace without contacting the FAA SOSC to request a Special Governmental Interest airspace authorization for the altitude you need for that particular emergency.** The SOSC office and email (9-ATOR-HQ-SOSC@faa.gov) are staffed/monitored 0600-2400 Eastern Time. For all emergencies, please follow up any email with a phone call to 202-267-8276, which is answered 24/7.

Contact Mike O'Shea at michael.oshea@faa.gov or the FAA UAS Support Center at UASHelp@faa.gov if you have additional questions or need further clarification.