



Oregon

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Oregon Department of Aviation Releases UAS Operations and Policy Manual Template for State and Local Agencies

SALEM, OR — The Oregon Department of Aviation (ODAV) has released a new Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations and Policy Manual template to help Oregon state agencies, cities, counties, special districts, and other public bodies develop safe and consistent drone programs.

The template is designed as a practical starting point for agencies that use, or are considering the use of, drones for public works, transportation, emergency management, natural resources, infrastructure inspection, mapping, environmental monitoring, training, and other governmental functions. It gives agencies a framework they can adapt to their own missions, staffing, equipment, legal review, and risk profile.

As drone use continues to expand across government, public agencies need more than aircraft and licensed pilots. They need clear policies, defined roles, safety procedures, training standards, maintenance practices, privacy controls, data handling rules, and reporting processes. The new template brings those elements together in one document while allowing agencies to customize the manual for their specific operations.

“Drones are becoming an everyday tool for Oregon public agencies,” said Kenji Sugahara, Director of the Oregon Department of Aviation. “This template is intended to help agencies build programs that are safe, accountable, and consistent with Oregon and federal requirements. It gives agencies a strong foundation so they do not have to start from scratch.”

The manual includes sections on program governance, pilot qualifications, aircraft registration, Remote ID, Oregon public body registration and reporting, mission planning, operational control, risk assessment, airspace review, contractor use, emergency procedures, maintenance, records retention, privacy, data management, and public communication.

The template also recognizes that not every agency has the same mission. Public safety and law enforcement provisions are included as optional annexes so that general government

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agencies are not required to adopt procedures that do not apply to them. Law enforcement-specific sections are separately identified because Oregon law includes additional limits and requirements for those operations.

The document is intended to support responsible UAS use across Oregon by helping agencies answer basic operational questions before a flight occurs, including who is in charge of the mission, what authority the operation will use, what airspace approvals are needed, how data will be stored, what reports must be filed, and how the agency will respond if something goes wrong.

For smaller agencies, the template can reduce the administrative burden of developing a drone program. For larger agencies, it can help align internal divisions around a common safety and compliance structure. For agencies that work together during regional projects, mutual aid, emergency response, or contractor-supported missions, the template provides common language for operational control, mission approval, risk management, and post-flight documentation.

“This is about building trust as much as building capability,” Sugahara said. “When public agencies operate drones, the public should know that those flights are being planned, documented, and conducted under clear rules. A good policy manual helps protect the public, the agency, the pilot, and the airspace system.”

The Oregon Department of Aviation encourages agencies to review the template with their legal counsel, risk manager, information technology staff, public records officer, and program leadership before adoption. Agencies should also tailor the document to reflect their own mission needs, local procedures, equipment, staffing, and records retention requirements.

The UAS Operations and Policy Manual template is available [HERE](#).

About the Oregon Department of Aviation

Established in 1921, the Oregon Department of Aviation was the first state aviation department in the nation. ODAV enables and advocates for a safe and efficient aviation system that connects communities and drives economic growth.

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