



Los Angeles Park Rangers Notice of Intention to Use Unmanned Aircraft Systems in City Parks

The Department of Recreation and Parks, Park Ranger Division recently received approval from the Federal Aviation Administration to fly its small, battery powered, remotely-controlled quadcopters in city parks. They will be used in a variety of public safety applications such as helping to find lost hikers, looking for hot spots on fires, and assessing damage to park property. During these types of incidents, the unmanned aircraft can safely and effectively be deployed into hazardous environments or areas that could potentially jeopardize Ranger safety. They will not be used to for routine law enforcement patrols and surveillance, to issue citations, or carry weapons of any kind. This technology will provide another tool for Rangers to use in our efforts to protect and preserve both the parks and our visitors.

What are the specifics of the equipment used by the Park Rangers?

The Park Rangers currently have two small quadcopters. They are battery-operated and carry consumer grade camera/video equipment with thermal imaging capability and a detachable spotlight, beacon, or loudspeaker. They have an approximate flight time of 30 minutes due to battery limitations. Each aircraft weighs approximately 2 pounds, is approximately 12 inches long, and 4 inches tall.

When and where can Rangers fly these aircraft?

At this point, the aircraft can only be flown during daylight hours and less than 400 feet above ground. The small quadcopter must be flown within line of sight of the Ranger who is remotely piloting the helicopter, which essentially means it must be flown in the general area where it takes off. The Rangers are not allowed to fly directly over crowds such as sporting events or picnic groups. Rangers will only fly over Park property.

Will my privacy be impacted?

No, your privacy will not be impacted. Our aircraft will only be flown over park property. They will not be flown over residential areas or crowds. Maintaining an individual's privacy and protecting the civil liberties of all persons is of paramount importance to the department. The Los Angeles Park Ranger Division is bound by federal law and the laws of the State of California that direct the use of helicopters of all types and sizes, as it relates to the privacy of citizens. This same case law that applies to manned-helicopter programs that are used in many urban police and fire departments across the country is



the same case law that applies to these unmanned systems as well. Both statutory laws and case laws provide limits on the use of technology by public safety agencies to investigate suspected criminal activity in our community. Our Unmanned aircraft program will not be used for arbitrary surveillance and must comply with all federal regulations and state laws.

What training do your pilots have?

All Park Ranger remote pilots must be certified by the Federal Aviation Administration and possess a valid Remote pilot certificate. Additionally, all pilots attend classroom instruction on Divisional policy, FAA Regulations, and protecting privacy, civil rights and civil liberties as it applies to small unmanned aircraft systems operations. All Divisional pilots shall pass a written exam which tests knowledge and understanding of Divisional policy and Federal Aviation Regulations and a sUAS operations course focused on piloting skills, operational safety, and system maintenance.

Can citizens buy their own unmanned aircraft and fly them in Los Angeles city parks?

Generally, No. Section 63.44B.8. of the Los Angeles Municipal Code states that no person shall land, release, take off or fly any balloon, except children toy balloons not inflated with any flammable material, helicopter, parakite, hang glider, aircraft or powered models thereof, except in areas specifically set aside therefor. Park Rangers are exempt from this regulation while performing their official duties.