SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

707.1 PURPOSE
This policy is intended to provide personnel who are assigned responsibilities associated with the deployment and use of small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) with instructions on when and how this technology and the information it provides may be used for law enforcement and public safety purposes in accordance with law.

707.2 POLICY
It is the policy of the Beltrami County Sheriff’s Office that duly trained and authorized agency personnel may deploy sUAS when such use is appropriate in the performance of their official duties, and where deployment and use, and the collection and use of any audio/video recordings or other data originating from or generated by the sUAS, comport with the policy provisions provided herein and applicable law.

707.3 DEFINITIONS
Digital Multimedia Evidence (DME): Digital recording of images, sounds, and associated data

Model Aircraft: A remote controlled aircraft used by hobbyists that is built, produced, manufactured, and operated for the purposes of sport, recreation, and/or competition.

Unmanned Aircraft (UA) or Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV): An aircraft that is intended to navigate in the air without an on-board pilot. Also alternatively called Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV), or Drone.

Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS): A system that includes the necessary equipment, network, and personnel to control an unmanned aircraft.

Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS): UAS systems that utilize UAVs weighing less than 55 pounds and are consistent with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations governing model aircraft.

UAS Flight Crewmember: A pilot, visual observer, payload operator or other person assigned duties for a UAS for the purpose of flight or training exercise.

Unmanned Aircraft Pilot: A person exercising control over a UA/UAV/UAS during flight.
707.4 PROCEDURES

Use of unmanned aerial vehicles limited:

Except as provided in subdivision 3, the Beltrami County Sheriff's Office may not use a UAV without a search warrant issued under 626.19.

Subd. 3. Authorized use

Beltrami County Sheriff's Office may use a UAV:

(1) during or in the aftermath of an emergency situation that involves the risk of death or bodily harm to a person;

(2) over a public event where there is a heightened risk to the safety of participants or bystanders;

(3) to counter the risk of a terrorist attack by a specific individual or organization if the agency determines that credible intelligence indicates a risk;

(4) to prevent the loss of life and property in natural or man-made disasters and to facilitate operational planning, rescue, and recovery operations in the aftermath of these disasters;

(5) to conduct a threat assessment in anticipation of a specific event;

(6) to collect information from a public area if there is reasonable suspicion of criminal activity;

(7) to collect information for crash reconstruction purposes after a serious or deadly collision occurring on a public road;

(8) over a public area for officer training or public relations purposes; and

(9) for purposes unrelated to law enforcement at the request of a government entity provided that the government entity makes the request in writing to the law enforcement agency and specifies the reason for the request and proposed period of use.

Limitations on use:

(a) Beltrami County Sheriff's Office employee using a UAV must comply with all Federal Aviation Administration requirements and guidelines.

(b) Beltrami County Sheriff's Office employee must not deploy a UAV with facial recognition or other biometric-matching technology unless expressly authorized by a warrant.

(c) Beltrami County Sheriff's Office employee must not equip a UAV with weapons.

(d) Beltrami County Sheriff's Office employee must not use a UAV to collect data on public protests or demonstrations unless expressly authorized by a warrant or an exception applies under subdivision 3.

Documentation required:

Beltrami County Sheriff's Office must document each use of a UAV, connect each deployment to a unique case number, provide a factual basis for the use of a UAV, and identify the applicable exception under subdivision 3 unless a warrant was obtained.
E. sUAS Supervision and Reporting

1. sUAS supervisory personnel shall manage all deployments and uses of sUAS to ensure that deputies equipped with sUAS devices utilize them in accordance with policy and procedures defined herein.

2. An authorized sUAS supervisor or administrator will audit flight documentation at regular intervals. The results of the audit will be documented. Any changes to the flight time counter will be documented.

3. The Sheriff or his or her designee shall complete the MN BCA drone usage report and send it to the Department of Public Safety by January 15 of every year.

F. Training

1. Sheriff’s Office personnel who are assigned sUAS must complete an agency-approved training program to ensure proper use and operations. Additional training may be required at periodic intervals to ensure the continued effective use and operation and proper calibration and performance of the equipment and to incorporate changes, updates, or other revisions in policy and equipment.

2. All agency personnel with sUAS responsibilities, including command deputies, shall also be trained in the local and federal laws and regulations, as well as policies and procedures governing the deployment and use of sUAS.