Surveillance Impact Report

Counter UAS Remote Identification Detection Equipment, CUAS-RID
San Diego Police Department

DESCRIPTION

Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems Remote Identification Detection (CUAS-RID) Systems consist primarily of small hardware devices consisting of a radio signal receiver that is able to detect the RID broadcast from Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) from several miles away and display this broadcasted data onto a user interface for assessment. These devices are predominantly portable devices but may be installed semi-permanently.

The devices use antennas to receive the UAS RID radio signal. The device then sends the data via cellular network back to the manufacturers cloud-based system. The data can then be viewed via access to the cloud's user interface, commonly a website. The user interface requires password protected access credentials.

The data collected by the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) CUAS RID devices is partitioned or separated from display or access by non-department entities within the manufacturers cloud-based data management system.

SDPD is only seeking approval to procure, deploy, and utilize the CUAS equipment components that detect the FAA's mandated RID broadcast and no other sensors.

PURPOSE

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) commonly referred to as "drones" when used illegally, or carelessly, pose a threat to the safety and security of the citizens of San Diego and First Responders. They obstruct the ability for First Responders to properly address life safety and protection needs such as inhibiting fire response and intelligence gathering during high-risk tactical operations.

The implementation and use of Counter UAS Remote Identification equipment is to enhance the safety and security in the airspace and on the ground for first responder operations and for the general public by enhanced detection of the FAA mandated UAS data broadcast requirement known as Remote Identification or RID.

SDPD CUAS-RID equipment is authorized to support the following types of operations:

1. Any first responder incident where Air Asset's (Helicopter or UAS) are present.
2. Any fire incident that may potentially require Air Asset Support.
3. Any incident where an unidentified UAS is obstructing or interfering with first responder operation or reasonably believed to have the potential to cause interference or obstruction.
4. Any large mass gathering or special event that may pose a vulnerability for UAS borne attack or UAS safety hazard area.
5. Any Law Enforcement tactical operation that may have a vulnerability to officer or citizen safety derived from UAS counterintelligence gathering.
6. Any special detail enforcement project that has a nexus to nefarious UAS use in support of criminal activity, terrorist activity, or casing to commit criminal activity.
7. Training Operations.
8. Any other use case approved by the CUAS-RID Lieutenant. This duty commonly falls under the Air Support Lieutenant.

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The following rules and processes are required prior to each use of a CUAS-RID:

For Mobile CUAS-RID:

1. Requests for CUAS-RID support will be made by a supervisor.
2. Requests for CUAS-RID support for both planned and unplanned events should be forwarded to a CUAS-RID program approved Sergeant for use approval and coordination of response.
3. The CUAS-RID Sergeant will direct CUAS-RID equipped officers to deploy and activate CUAS-RID equipment as needed to the requested incident or event.
4. Only authorized CUAS-RID program personnel shall use or be in possession of Department issued CUAS-RID detection equipment, unless approved by a CUAS-RID program Sergeant. Note: Members of the San Diego Fire Department may be included in the CUAS-RID Program and authorized to carry and deploy CUAS-RID detection equipment to facilitate better access and faster detection capability during critical fire incidents.
5. CUAS-RID equipped officers will deploy to the vicinity of the scene as directed and activate their detection equipment. They will remain in the area until directed to relocate or deactivate equipment by the CUAS-RID supervisor.
6. Only authorized CUAS-RID program personnel shall have access to or be in possession of the department's CUAS-RID User Interface (UI). The officer accessing the CUAS-RID UI will relay information with the Incident Commander and CUAS-RID supervisor as needed to support the overall incident.

Department procedures associated with the use of UASs are:

- XXX – Use of Counter UAS Remote Identification Detection Equipment
- 8.23 – Use of Small Unmanned Aircraft System
- 3.02 – Impound, Release, and Disposal of Property, Evidence and Articles Missing Identification marks
- 1.49 – AXON Body Worn Cameras.

LOCATION

SDPD CUAS-RID devices are primarily deployed citywide via vehicle as "mobile" units. These devices will only be issued to selected trained personnel with duty positions that will allow them to respond to necessary critical incidents across the city.

SDPD CUAS-RID may also be deployed out of city limits and out of the county if requested by an outside agency or if requested by an authorized SDPD unit that is responsible for a law enforcement operation beyond city limits.

In all cases, the CUAS-RID equipment can only be requested and used to support the authorized types of operations aforementioned.

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All requests for CUAS-RID support must be initiated by an incident commander in response to support a specific incident or event with a specific support objective. CUAS-RID deployment is based on the equipment and capabilities needed for each specific incident.

IMPACT

CUAS-RID are deployed only to specific incidents, investigations, or with a specific target or specific project objective. Only members trained on the CUAS-RID and the User interface will be authorized to access the data collected by the CUAS-RID system.

Because the CUAS-RID system can only read RID broadcasts, and that RID broadcasts are a mandatory FAA requirement, there is no possibility for a violation of civil rights and liberties, nor a use that would disproportionately affect a marginalized community.

The uses and deployments of surveillance technology are not based upon discriminatory or viewpoint-based factors. The Department's use of surveillance technology is intended to support and benefit the communities of San Diego while minimizing and mitigating potential impacts on the civil rights and civil liberties of community members.

MITIGATIONS

The CUAS-RID system can only read radio wave signals that are broadcast by the UAS or an RID transmitting device. The CUAS-RID system does not read or collect any other types of Radio wave signals or data.

DATA TYPES AND SOURCES

CUAS-RID Devices can only read and collect the FAA mandated RID broadcast.

Under 14 C.F.R. Part 89.305 the minimum message elements that a standard UAS RID must electronically broadcast are:

- The Identity of the UAS, consisting of.
  - A serial number assigned to the unmanned aircraft by the person responsible for the production of the standard remote identification unmanned aircraft; or
  - A session ID
- An indication of the latitude and longitude of the control station.
- An indication of the geometric altitude of the control station.
- An indication of the latitude and longitude of the unmanned aircraft.
- An indication of the geometric altitude of the unmanned aircraft
- An indication of the velocity of the unmanned aircraft.
- A time mark identifying the Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) time of applicability of a position source output.
- An indication of the emergency status of the unmanned aircraft

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DATA SECURITY

San Diego Police Department Procedure X.XX - Use of Counter UAS Remote Identification Detection Equipment, states in part:

> "Only authorized CUAS-RID program personnel shall have access to or be in possession of the department's CUAS-RID User Interface (UI). The officer accessing the CUAS-RID UI will relay information with the Incident Commander and CUAS-RID supervisor as needed to support the overall incident."

San Diego Police Department Procedure X.XX - Use of Counter UAS Remote Identification Detection Equipment, states in part:

1. All data received by the CUAS-RID and managed on the UI is not considered evidence and is not automatically stored nor retained.

2. All data received by the CUAS-RID and managed on the UI will be safeguarded to protect the privacy of citizens, and will not be shared other than for official law enforcement use.

3. The collection and retention of data managed on the UI that is identified as Digital Media Evidence (DME) will be limited to the extent necessary to support an investigation, enforcement actions, or evaluation for potential criminal and terrorist activity.

4. Data that is identified as DME will be stored and retained in accordance with Department procedure 3.02.

Once the DME has been impounded physically or electronically, retention, access, possession, and copying of such evidence are controlled and regulated by SDPD Procedure 3.02 – Impound, Release, and Disposal of Property, Evidence and Articles Missing Identification marks and SDPD Procedure 1.49 – AXON Body Worn Cameras.

Only sworn SDPD Police Officers may become part of the CUAS-RID team. All SDPD UAS personnel must be approved by the CUAS-RID Unit Sergeant, the Lieutenant who supervises the CUAS-RID Project. All SDPD UAS personnel receive specialized training on the proper handling, possession and impounding of DME recovered by CUAS-RID system.

Once DME has been impounded physically or electronically, data protection becomes the responsibility of the Property Unit or the evidence.com system and all such evidence is controlled and regulated by SDPD Procedure 3.02 – Impound, Release, and Disposal of Property, Evidence and Articles Missing Identification marks and SDPD Procedure 1.49 – AXON Body Worn Cameras.

FISCAL COST

The SDPD CUAS-RID equipment is forecasted to cost approximately $200,000.00 for a 5 year hardware and service package. These costs are required to procure, maintain, and upgrade the CUAS-RID technology to an effective operational state.

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Grant funding is being sought to procure this equipment.

THIRD PARTY DEPENDENCE

CUAS-RID collected DME is not shared with third-party vendors. All CUAS-RID collected DME is impounded either physically in the SDPD Property Room or digitally into evidence.com. The UAS unit only shares collected DME with the San Diego City Attorney or the San Diego District Attorney in connection with legal proceedings, in response to a valid court or judicial order or in accordance with federal or state law.

ALTERNATIVES

The alternative to having a CUAS-RID system is to have numerous officers staffed at Special Events and critical incidents whose sole purpose is to watch for illegal drone incursions. These officers would then be responsible to watch and observe where the UAS lands to attempt to contact the operator. This alternative is not cost effective as dozens of officers working in shifts would be required to adequately and effectively maintain control of the airspace in a covered area. It is also not effective for rapid responses to illegal drone incursions.

TRACK RECORD

Federal agencies, state agencies, local law enforcement agencies, and even civilian companies have owned and used this equipment for the last several years, including Petco Park, Port of San Diego, PGA at Torrey Pines Golf Course for Farmers open. All have shown very successful operations with no negative impact to communities.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMENTS

On July 22, 2026, at 1500 hours, there was a publicly held meeting in all nine council districts in the City of San Diego. The Community Data Sharing technology was presented by the San Diego Police Department during the meeting.

There were three attendees in District 1. There were zero attendees in District 2. There were zero attendees in District 3. There were thirteen attendees in District 4. There were two attendees in District 5. There were zero attendees in District 6. There were four attendees in District 7. There were zero attendees in District 8. There was one attendee in District 9.

There was a total of 12 comments and questions out of the 23 attendees city-wide.
See Attachment A of all comments and questions submitted during the meeting.

Additionally, there were 153 comments submitted to an online public comment form:

- Surveillance Technology Feedback Form For the June 22, 2026 Community Meeting – Results

See Attachment B for all comments submitted online.

The meeting was video recorded and can be viewed at:

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- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUmQerbqkk0

The following comments and questions specific to CUAS-RID technology were posed by the public during the meeting:

None.

The following comments specific to CUAS-RID technology were submitted online:

Entry #6 - (Referencing all technologies, except UROV and DFR)

I do not support SDPD's use of ALPR data. Flock has been shown time and time again to be an unaccountable service, just as SDPD is an unaccountable agency. SDPD must also acknowledge the massive distrust they have created amongst the public with their constant abuses of power, racial bias, and violence against San Diegans before I could consider trusting them with increased surveillance technology.

Counter UAS technology is a comical waste of money for a municipal police force. SDPD is not a branch of the military and we shouldn't indulge their fantasies.

Response: The SDPD UAS Unit is seeking grant funding to support CUAS technology. CUAS technology has been recommended by the Federal government and the FBI to help support anti-terrorism efforts locally and regionally, especially high vulnerability targets to include special events and mass gatherings in order to help protect the community.

Entry #34 - (Referencing Smart Glasses, CUAS, and ALPR)

I do not believe ai and mass data recon used without individual judge order. There has been too many nationwide dangerous use by unethical police and admin using this technology to harass people, stalk exes, or commit crimes. The companies are also known to employ contractors as confirmed sex abusers and child abusers.

The money should instead be used to hire additional policy officers to reduce overtime of officers which your office points as the cause of the many abuses of the citizens leading to massive payouts. That or a shift to self insurance of officers.

Response: The CUAS-RID technology will not incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI). The CUAS-RID equipment only detects the data that is mandated by the FAA that all drones must broadcast to the public via radio signal. It does not detect or collect any personal individual information and does not violate the Fourth Amendment. The SDPD UAS Unit is seeking grant funding to support CUAS technology.

Entry #36 - (Referencing all technologies)

While new technologies offer exciting possibilities, we must carefully consider their potential impact on privacy, civil liberties, and democratic values. Several emerging

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technologies raise significant concerns that warrant careful scrutiny and robust public debate:

Counter UAS Technology (CUAS): While CUAS systems aim to mitigate the risks posed by unauthorized drones, they raise concerns about who controls these powerful tools and their potential for misuse. Could CUAS be used to suppress dissent or unfairly target specific individuals or groups?

We must approach these emerging technologies with caution, ensuring they are developed and deployed responsibly. Robust regulations, transparent oversight mechanisms, and strong protections for privacy and civil liberties are essential to mitigate the potential risks and harness the benefits of these powerful tools. And to date - this city government has not shown the ability to use many technologies responsibly or given actual thought on how it may negatively impact citizens.

Response: Only a limited number of Officers will have access to and be authorized to use CUAS-RID equipment. CUAS-RID equipment is unable to target specific individuals or groups. It is unable to target any individual or group. The CUAS-RID equipment only detects the data that is mandated by the FAA that all drones must broadcast to the public via radio signal. It does not detect or collect any personal individual information and does not violate the Fourth Amendment.

Entry #55 - (Referencing DFR, CUAS, and ALPR)

we do not need or want more privately owned autonomous services invading the privacy of san diego residents. computer systems and corporations cannot be adequately held accountable for data leaks and/or misuse of private information, especially in a day and age where these systems are so poorly understood by our geriatric federal government.

remove Flock and Axom and any other AI, drones, ALPR, or otherwise automated surveillance that should never be used on our citizens

Response: CUAS-RID equipment will be procured and owned by the San Diego Police Department and not privately owned. The use of this technology will not be autonomous, it will be manually deployed and activated.

Entry #116 - (Referencing Smart Glasses, CUAS, and CDS)

Surveillance technologies such as these have not been shown to make statistically significant improvements in safety. They are expensive to taxpayers and have great potential for misuse.

Entry #118 - (Referencing CUAS, CDS, and ALPR)

It's already been proven to easily be abused.

Response: The SDPD currently does not have any CUAS-RID equipment and has not had any in the past. There has been no CUAS operations conducted by SDPD. There is no history of abuse of CUAS-RID equipment.

Entry #141 - (Referencing all technologies, except UROV and CUAS)

These technologies have little to no supporting data regarding public safety. They're too expensive in our current budget crisis to play around with. Our money can be better spent on initiatives that are known to improve response times, reduce the potential for abuse, and have data backed successes (if not here than

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in other cities). License plate readers have not meaningfully helped reduce or solve crimes in San Diego nor in other cities. Smart glasses have no public safety benefits unless secretly watching women, children, and anyone not white can be considered public safety. Sharing data needs very strong, legally bound restrictions before it can be considered safe.

Response: The SDPD UAS Unit is seeking grant funding to support CUAS technology. CUAS technology has been recommended by the Federal government and the FBI to help support anti-terrorism efforts locally and regionally, especially high vulnerability targets to include special events and mass gatherings in order to help protect the community.

Entry #153 - (Referencing CUAS, CDS, and ALPR)

1984 looks embarrassingly tame compared to what you monsters are proposing.

Response: The fictional novel 1984 by George Orwell, portrays the Protagonist, Winston Smith as being opposed to the government's rigid control of society by prohibiting free thinking and an expression of individuality. CUAS-RID equipment does not prohibit free thinking or expression of individuality in any way, it tracks an FAA recommended data point

There were numerous comments submitted online that were not specific to CUAS-RID technology but were in reference to all of the technologies presented or a majority of them to include CUAS-RID technology. All of these comments can be found in Appendix B. These comments focused on a few general topics to include the funding sources, need for the technology, violations of privacy and the Fourth amendment, user access and abuse. Below are the CUAS-RID related responses to address of those comments in mass:

Funding Response: The SDPD UAS Unit is seeking grant funding to support CUAS technology.

Technology Needs Response: CUAS technology has been recommended by the Federal government and the FBI to help support anti-terrorism efforts locally and regionally, especially high vulnerability targets to include special events and mass gatherings in order to help protect the community.

Privacy and Fourth Amendment Violation Response: The CUAS-RID equipment only detects the data that is mandated by the FAA that all drones must broadcast to the public via radio signal. It does not detect or collect any personal individual information and does not violate the Fourth Amendment.

User access and abuse Response: Only a limited number of officers will have access to and authorized to use CUAS-RID equipment. CUAS-RID equipment is unable to target specific individuals or groups. It is unable to target any individual or group.

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