

HCPD Drone Fact Sheet

- Drones are used by police departments around the country for various public safety missions:
 - locating missing people using infrared technology
 - providing aerial views during crisis incidents
 - searching for suspects avoiding apprehension
 - taking photos of collision and crime scenes
 - training and community outreach
- HCPD purchased three drones for the one-year field test, together costing \$33,800. Part of the cost was covered by a \$20,000 contribution from the Howard County Police Foundation.
- HCPD follows public guidelines from the ACLU to ensure the community can benefit from drone technology without privacy concerns.
 - Deployed when there is an emergency situation in a defined area when lives and safety are at risk.
 - Used to collect evidence relating to criminal activity when there are specific and articulable grounds.
 - Used when a search warrant is issued by a judge for a constitutionally-protected area.
 - NOT deployed for mass surveillance that could violate First Amendment-protected activities.
- HCPD is implementing drone field testing with transparency and will openly share information about drone usage.
- The field test will start with 10 officers who will stay in their current assignments and respond to incidents when a drone is needed. They will be trained and certified remote pilots, as required by the FAA.
- Throughout the one-year field test period the police department will regularly monitor and evaluate the program.