

MEMORANDUM

To	UAV Operators
From	UAV Coordinator, Manager Support Operations
CC	BOM, LSEC
Date	Wednesday, 21 July 2021
Pages	5
Subject	UAV Operations & Welcome Season 21-22

Introduction

Hey Aviators, this season I have been given the opportunity to take on the role of Branch UAV Coordinator. Taking on this role and assisting branch grow this capability would not have been possible without the amazing selfless efforts of fellow Duty Officer Brittaney Banks. As UAV Coordinator, Brittaney over the last two years has pulled this capability together from bare bones. This includes enhancing SOPs, managing pilot training, gear maintenance and building up a call out capacity whilst acting as the conduit between SLSNSW and Sydney Branch UAV services.

Thankfully, Brittaney will be staying on as a Duty Officer, UAV instructor mentor and working with Branch as a Youth Development Coordinator. On behalf of the Branch, pilots and club members, I'd like to recognise and thank her for the efforts in this role.

Over the season, as part of a continuous improvement process, we will aim for more opportunities to fly in groups and pairs, so the entire UAV team can consolidate and improve their skills. We are also planning to get blanket approval for RNP flights for emergency response and patrolling however more work with regards to approvals needs to be done in this space. Getting more members of the team together flying on a more regular basis helps develop and improve our capability. This will be key to successfully meeting the increased scope and demand which is anticipated over the next few seasons.

UAV Operations Coordinator Background

For those who do not know me as a quick lifesaving intro, I have been actively patrolling for 15+ years, progressing through the ranks (in no particular order) as a PC, Gear Steward, Trainer and Competitor. Currently, I am serving as the Club Captain at Bronte SLSC and as a Sydney Branch Duty Officer.

From a UAV point of view, I come from a mixed background of skills and experience. I am a qualified REPL Pilot who regularly flies a personal Phantom 4 for fun and development, blended in with government work and surveillance patrols for SLS and DPI. Over the last two years I have had the opportunity to work for a Disaster Relief agency as an Image Analyst and Pilot, tasked with conducting aerial damage assessments and mapping that feeds actionable intelligence reports for councils, emergency services and associated recovery agencies.



My takeaway from these lessons learnt journey is flying Drones is easy, anyone can fly a drone, it is the planning and product outcomes that differentiate a skilled and therefore valued pilot from a novice. Driving all of this is fundamentally knowing first what your actual flight outcome is intended to be and taking off from there.

This season I therefore encourage you all to focus on skilling up on your flight mission planning, pre-emptive communication with stakeholders (Patrol, Lifeguards, Council), risk assessment and situational awareness. More simply, plan and communicate your intent, fly safe with a purpose and add value whilst having fun.

A simple example is:

- Plan a mission on paper or via AVCRM being mindful of airspace and local constraints
- Seek approval and announce your general intentions as required
- Setup a manageable take off / landing zone, making best use of the terrain to minimise the risk to public
- Go through a staged setup of pre-flight checks and fault remediations
- Practice flying quickly to a point (swimmer in distress / unusual object sighted) visually sighting the UAV and trying to limit the initial use the screen to develop situational awareness and deployment speed.
- Work with another pilot or train up a spotter for crowd control, risk mitigation, communications and logistical support being mindful that it is the Pilots responsibility to maintain visual line of sight (VLOS) of your UAV with a max 500m distance limitation.
- Do a line search utilising the screen and visual reference points such as the back of the surf zone
- Conduct area sweeps, take photos, review them on your screen, work out what methods of flight and positioning produce the best imagery .. rinse – repeat.

UAV Contacts – Sydney Branch

For all UAV Operational concerns, questions and queries, in the first instance, please contact:

UAV Coordinator - James McLennan uav@surflifesavingsydney.com.au or **0425251349**

If it is critical and the Branch UAV coordinator cannot be contacted, please contact:

Manager Support Operations - Jackson Towns som@surflifesavingsydney.com.au or **0452579648**

Or the on-call **RCO (Rescue Coordinator) on 0490 087 801**

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Messaging / Info updates

We will be tidying up the WhatsApp Chat groups, looking to have a general all in group plus additional instructor and Patrol location based chat. This may move to Microsoft Teams or Deputy or something similar where we can have pinned messages, document links, FAQs, etc which WhatsApp doesn't support. As a team we will work on a simple solution that works for the majority whilst ensuring we can get info out to you as I really want more opportunities for our pilots to get in the air and spread their wings.

Proficiencies / Skills

At a high level, the plan is for pilots to become familiar again with the SLSNSW SOPs and complete the online proficiency which most should have done last season. It is a short 19 question multiple choice test that confirms your understanding of SLS UAV SOPs and general best practice for UAV use.

Building from previous seasons, we will be scheduling some "hands on the controls" flight proficiencies this season. The focus will be small team training with our new instructors to not only confirm skills but to foster better engagement and mentoring amongst the team as together we lean in and learn more. At this stage are targeting Oct / Nov for the hands on proficiency so as to not impact start of season.

We are currently waiting for a standard proficiency template from SLSNSW. Our aim is to have a consistent base level of competency across our Branch and then hopefully across the State. The hands on proficiency will cover such things as setup, fault identification, rules and regulations Q & A, simple box flying and some free flight observation all aiming to build confidence and to identify areas to improve on.

Instructor info

At Sydney Branch we have a fantastic cadre of instructors who will not only train the next generation but also be available to assist with proficiencies, mentoring and continuation training. As an update, the current SLS volunteer OIP training program is being re written with the majority of theory and basics moving to the online self-learn Canvas portal.

The aim is to provide more efficient rostering of instructor led flight time which will benefit both the students and instructors due to more training flight hours with less classroom time. This staged approach will hopefully assist us in promoting our four probationary instructors to full instructor status in a more timely manner.

Sydney Branch UAV Instructors	Status
Brittaney Banks	Full
Craig Howie	Full
Cameron Burns	Probationary
Liam Byrne	Probationary
Tarek Elgayar	Probationary
James McLennan	Probationary

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Rostering

Across the state, Support Operations members will be moving towards using the Deputy Rostering App for rostering and pinned information updates. As valued members of the Support Operations team, you will shortly receive a brand new, personalised '@surflifesaving.com.au' email address which will be used to communicate essential surf life saving information (so it won't be lost in your FlyBuys, Frequent Flyer Point personal emails) and used to login to Deputy when your accounts are created. This system will then link with Surfguard which increases our administrative abilities and makes our volunteer roles a hell of a lot easier admin wise! Not to mention the flexibility it provides you with as user and the professional and well-designed layout is extremely easy to use. Stay tuned – memo and information will be forthcoming over the next few weeks!

Planned Branch Operations

Approvals are being sought for UAV operations in Royal National Park (RNP) and other restricted flight areas – stay tuned as this will drastically increase our UAV demands. Building on last season, it is envisaged that routine volunteer Patrol flights will once again occur at Clovelly / Gordons Bay, Maroubra and Cronulla locations however these are obviously dependent upon council approvals, weather and resource availability.

Planned DPI Operations

At this stage there are no planned changes for the paid DPI surveillance operations that occur of the school holiday period however confirmation will be provided before start of season as we are waiting SLSNSW and councils to confirm new contractual agreements.

As a reminder, the DPI Mavic 2 Enterprise Zoom (M2EZ) UAVs should not be relocated from their current operational bases at Maroubra or Wanda without approval from either myself, the Support Operations Manager and/or the SLSNSW UAV Team. These assets are primarily allocated for DPI use or emergency callout only at this stage.

Callout Procedure

For those on the Support Operations Callout list, in the event of an unplanned or emergency callout, completing an AVCRM mission plan is not required in the immediate instance. It should be noted that whilst providing timely support at the request of an RCO or DO is a priority, as qualified SLS Pilots, please adhere to the following points:

- Confirm if helicopters (LS21, POLAIR, Toll) will be entering the air space location to support the incident as you may need to land / cancel flights due to safety
- The operational airspace is checked via OpenSky if you are not familiar with that area for flight restrictions
- The launch/landing area is clear of public and emergency services personal

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- You are flying within your personal and UAV capabilities
- You are flying within the constraints of the SOP
- Take note of your flight time and conditions (photo / notes on your phone)

Flights can then be flown however AVCRM logs need to be completed within 24hrs of your flights as per the SLSNSW UAV SOPs. Taking some quick notes with regards to flight times, conditions and reason for flight will aid you in completing this task.

It is recommended that Callout team members save the following numbers in their Contacts. This is so you can identify and respond as either calls or sometimes text messages will come from the following numbers.

SurfCom - 9471 8092

SurfCom Pager – 0419 297 774

RCO Mobile - 0490 087 801

Regards

James McLennan
UAV COORDINATOR

Jackson Towns
MANAGER SUPPORT OPERATIONS

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