

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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OCT 29 2018

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Re: Coast Guard Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones)

Dear Sirs:

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request of September 9, 2016, to the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for information related to use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS, drones), and the related lawsuit, *Electronic Privacy Information Center v. Department of Homeland Security*, Civil Action No. 18-545-KBJ.

The Coast Guard received a copy of your request from the Department. We are granting your request under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended. After carefully reviewing the responsive documents regarding drone use, we have determined that several items are appropriate for public release. In accordance with 5 U.S.C § 552(b)(6), personal identifying information of nonpublic figures has been redacted from all documents.

In response to your request for “all policies and procedures concerning the collection, use, retention, and dissemination of information obtained by the DHS using drones/UAS,” the Coast Guard is releasing a document entitled “Department of Homeland Security U.S. Coast Guard Operational Imagery Security Classification Guide.” USCG0001-0049. This document contains redactions under 5 U.S.C § 552(7)(E) and (7)(F) because Coast Guard personnel conclude that it contains sensitive information regarding techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations and information that, if shared, could reasonably be expected to endanger the safety of individuals or could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law.

In response to your request for “all policies and procedures concerning the training and oversight of individuals who work on DHS drone/UAS programs and/or have access to personally identifiable information collected by the DHS using drones/UAS,” the Coast Guard is releasing several documents, including Coast Guard manuals and Standard Operating Procedures for the operation of UAS. USCG 0050-0181. These documents contain redactions under 5 U.S.C § 552(7)(E) because they contain sensitive information regarding techniques and procedures for

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law enforcement investigations. The release of such information could assist suspect vessels in evading Coast Guard detection or even advance their efforts to counter-detect Coast Guard UAS.

We are withholding in its entirety USCG0146-0154, a staff memoranda from a Coast Guard attorney to the Coast Guard's Office of Aviation Forces. This document is being withheld under 5 U.S.C § 552(b)(5) as an attorney/client communication providing advice and recommendations preliminary to final Coast Guard action regarding the operation of unmanned aircraft under 14 C.F.R. § 107.

We are also withholding in their entirety USCG0163-0164, routing pages accompanying the Group I Unmanned Aircraft Systems Prototype Program Initiative (GUPPI) Charter Memo. These pages are being withheld under 5 U.S.C § 552(b)(5) as pre-decisional opinions and recommendations of Coast Guard personnel that do not reflect the official position of the Coast Guard or a final action taken by the agency.

Finally, in response to your request for "all policies and procedures concerning the DHS's processing of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties complaints that arise from the DHS's use of drones/UAS," the Coast Guard is releasing several documents, including a guide to filing a complaint with DHS, a Privacy Impact Assessment for the Coast Guard Research and Development Center Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) Program, and multiple privacy threshold analyses. USCG 0182-0234.

We have enclosed the above items. You may send an email with any additional inquiries directly to efoia@uscg.mil or call (202) 475-3522.

Sincerely,



BRIAN JUDGE
U.S. Coast Guard
Chief, Office of Claims and Litigation
By direction of the Commandant

Enclosure