

# Drones

Policy #SS009

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Responsible Administrator(s): Treasurer and Vice President for Finance and Administration

Responsible Office(s): Department of Public Safety

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## Policy Statement

The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) is committed to supporting academic excellence and the creative opportunities that drones may make possible. This policy supports the use of drones for pedagogical and other purposes on FIT property and as part of FIT activities and ensures that drones are operated safely and in compliance with federal, state, and local law, including Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

Individuals interested in using drones will refer to this policy to determine under what conditions drones can be flown and where, including requirements to notify Public Safety, and additional protocols that must be followed when seeking approval to fly a drone.

## Reason for the Policy

This policy addresses the legal, operational, and technological concerns that the use of drones raises. It also serves to let the campus community know under what circumstances drone flying is permissible and seeks to balance academic interests with legal and safety concerns.

This policy establishes the permissions and procedures for drone operation as the technology becomes more prevalent in higher education curricula and activities. The policy will help guide faculty, staff, and students who may seek to pursue drone use at FIT.

## Who is Responsible for this Policy

- Director of Public Safety/Finance and Administration
- Academic Affairs
- Information Technology
- Enrollment Management and Student Success

## Who is Affected by this Policy

- All FIT employees
- All FIT students

## Definitions

- **Drone:** a drone is any unmanned aircraft, of any weight, size, and speed, and all of the associated support equipment necessary to operate it by remote control. Drones may be referred to as unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV).
- **FIT property:** The FIT campus and any property owned, rented, leased, or otherwise controlled by FIT.
- **FIT activity:** an FIT activity includes any event, function, or activity that is organized or financed in whole or in part by the College or by any FIT office, department, division, course, program, or organization, including student organizations/clubs/teams.

## Principles

- **Drone Operation Requirements**

Any college employee, student, vendor, visitor, or other third party who seeks to operate a drone on FIT property or as part of an FIT activity must obtain advance approval from the Department of Public Safety by submitting a written request in accordance with the process outlined in the Procedures section, below. Any operation that is not approved in advance is strictly prohibited. The Department of Public Safety will review the request based on the following requirements and considerations:

- All drone use must meet or exceed FAA regulations and any applicable local laws. Note that although the FAA does not regulate indoor use of drones or drones weighing less than .55 pounds, FIT, as a matter of policy, requires that FAA regulations and applicable local laws be followed with respect to all such drone activities.
- Any drone operated on FIT property or in an FIT activity must weigh less than 55 pounds (including payload). Drones exceeding this weight are not permitted under any circumstances.
- Drones may only be piloted by a remote pilot in command who has a valid and current remote pilot certificate with a small UAS rating pursuant to FAA regulations or, in instructional circumstances only, a person who is under the direct supervision of a remote pilot in command and the remote pilot in command has the ability to immediately take direct control of the flight of the drone.
- Permission will typically only be granted to fly drones indoors because FIT property is located in outdoor airspace where drones may not be operated and/or would involve operating drones over human beings, as prohibited by Part 107 of FAA regulations.
- Permission to fly drones outdoors at certain FIT property or as part of an FIT activity will only be granted if the applicant demonstrates that both the location of the flight and the operation of the drone are within Part 107 of FAA regulations and will not involve violation of any applicable local laws.
- On the FIT New York campus, indoor drone operations may only be approved by the Department of Public Safety for operation in John E. Reeves Great Hall, Haft Auditorium, the Katie Murphy Amphitheater, and the two gymnasia.
- Drones may only be flown for purposes connected to FIT's educational mission and may not be flown solely for recreational use. The Department of Public Safety may require the applicant to articulate the purpose of the flight and its connection to FIT's mission, if it is not otherwise evident.

- The Department of Public Safety reserves the right to seek approval from other departments, such as Academic Affairs or Communications and External Relations, depending on the intended function of the drone use, and may require notification of other departments.
- If the flight will be conducted by a third party (e.g., a vendor hired by FIT), the third party must provide a certificate of insurance at coverage levels set by FIT and name FIT and related entities, as specified by FIT, as additional insureds and certificate holders. Unless FIT has hired a third-party to operate a drone in accordance with this policy, drones flown from FIT property or as part of an FIT activity must be authorized by FIT to ensure that the drones are safe and regularly maintained.

## Responsibilities

- **Public Safety**

The Department of Public Safety must review all requests for drone use and consult with other departments as appropriate to evaluate such requests. They may approve or deny requests, with modifications, and will notify the requesting party in writing of the decision.

- **Information Technology**

IT will ensure drones owned by FIT are properly registered with the FAA (if required), securely stored when not in use, and are mechanically maintained.

- **Drone Pilots**

Drone pilots must:

- Submit their request for drone use no later than 10 days prior to the intended flight date;
- Operate their flight at standards that meet or exceed FAA regulations, including checking the B4UFLY FAA Mobile App to ensure no changes in flight area have occurred (in cases where drone use is at an outdoor off-campus location, for example, an outdoor drone park);
- Ensure all participants are aware they may be photographed or filmed as part of the drone flight (in cases where drones are used for photography/filming use; see Filming, Photography, and Audio policy in Section VII);
- Ensure proper safety procedures are in place as part of the drone flight such as:
  - Proper signage for indoor use, notifying anyone nearing the location that a drone is in flight;
  - Make sure any individuals participating in the event understand basic safety procedures regarding approaching or handling the drone;
- Return FIT-owned drones to IT for safe storage and maintenance; and
- Notify Public Safety once the flight has ended.

## Procedures

- **Purchase of Drones**

To initially purchase a drone, the interested FIT community member must:

- Consult with Information Technology on current drones authorized by FIT and their availability and functionality for the contemplated drone use.
  - Obtain approval from the respective Dean and Department Chairperson or Director. If the drone will be part of the ongoing curriculum of a course, the standard process for curriculum changes/approvals must be followed prior drone use.
  - Consult with Public Safety to ensure that contemplated drone use falls within the confines of this policy. This requirement does not alleviate the need to seek advance approval from Public Safety prior to every flight.
  - If all approvals have been obtained, purchase the drone through Information Technology. The funding for the drone will be paid for by the appropriate school or department.
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- **Drone Use Request**  
A request for drone use approval should be submitted to the Department of Public Safety via Drone Use Request Form in writing at least ten business days prior to the planned flight. (Please see Related Documents.) Additionally, a semester-by-semester approval may be issued to faculty users of the Faculty Research Space for indoor drone use, provided the request is submitted prior to the start of the first class.  
  
The request must include:
    - the name and contact information of the requesting party, the remote pilot in command, and any other operators under the direct supervision of a remote pilot in command;
    - verification that the proposed pilot has completed the requisite training, including proof of valid and current remote pilot certificate with a small UAS rating pursuant to FAA regulations;
    - the date, time and location of the requested flight;
    - the purpose of the flight;
    - the equipment to be used and its specifications (e.g. weight);
    - a description of any data or information to be collected and how that data will be used;
    - verification that the requesting party operates in compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations; and
    - proof of liability insurance for any non-FIT operators.

The Department of Public Safety will consult with other departments as appropriate to evaluate the request, and may request additional information in connection with its evaluation of the request and may require notification of other departments.

The Department of Public Safety may approve or deny or approve the request with modifications, and will notify the requesting party in writing of its decision. As this policy is intended to support the college's mission while also addressing issues of safety, privacy, and compliance with applicable laws and FAA regulations, the Department of Public Safety may rescind a previously-granted approval and require the immediate cessation of any operation that does not meet these requirements.

If an incident (e.g. injury, property damage, theft/loss of drone) occurs during drone flight the pilot must report the situation to the Department of Public Safety as soon as practical.

## Violations

N/A

## Related Policies

- [Filming, Photography, and Audio](#)
- [Event Management and Facilities Rental - External Clients](#)
- [Event Management and Facilities Rental - Internal Clients](#)

## Related Documents

- [Federal Aviation Administration rules for Unmanned Aircraft Systems](#)
- [New York City Parks Department list of Model Aircraft Fields for approved sites for outdoor use of drones](#)

## Contacts

- **Director of Public Safety**  
236 West 27th Street  
(212) 217-7777