

Preparing Public Safety for a More Connected Airspace

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Traffic Management (UTM)

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Overview

This white paper is the third in a series of emerging risks associated with unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), building directly on previous white papers: [Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\): Evolving Risks to Large-Scale Public Gatherings](#) (April 2026) and the [UAS Cyber Risks Companion Guide](#) (May 2026). This supplement addresses a different but equally important question: what happens when the regulatory and operational environment for drones fundamentally changes?

This white paper examines the public safety and security implications of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) proposed [Part 108](#) rulemaking, *Normalizing Unmanned Aircraft Systems Beyond Visual Line of Sight Operations*, and the broader UAS Traffic Management (UTM) ecosystem intended to support beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations.^{1,2} Part 108, which is widely expected to take effect sometime in 2026, has the potential to fundamentally change the volume, character, coordination, and management of drone operations within the National Airspace System (NAS). It represents the most significant restructuring of U.S. drone regulations since [Part 107](#) took effect in 2016.^{3,4,5}

UAS Traffic Management (UTM): UTM refers to the digital ecosystem designed to help coordinate large numbers of drones operating in low-altitude airspace, particularly BVLOS operations. Unlike traditional air traffic control, UTM will rely on automated systems, data sharing, communications networks, and third-party service providers that support flight planning, operational coordination, and other digital services needed to safely manage drone activity.

Key Takeaway: Part 108 enables expanded drone operations; UTM helps coordinate them. For public safety agencies, this creates new complexities for information sharing, mission prioritization, and the ability to identify unsafe or unauthorized activity in an increasingly crowded operating environment.

Part 108 does not replace or eliminate existing UAS risks; it changes the environment in which those risks will occur. As drone operations expand beyond individual pilots and isolated missions, public safety agencies will increasingly operate within a shared low-altitude aviation ecosystem involving commercial operators, automated aircraft, drone service providers, and UTM platforms.

While Part 108 and supporting UTM services are expected to improve visibility into authorized BVLOS operations, they will also create a more dynamic and interconnected operating environment. Public safety agencies will therefore need to think beyond operating drones and increasingly manage their role as airspace stakeholders,

integrating new sources of operational information to maintain situational awareness and support safety, security, and incident response.^{6,7,8,9}

In this environment, first responders will increasingly rely on Remote ID, UTM services, operational coordination, and traditional detection capabilities to distinguish authorized activity from unsafe, unauthorized, or potentially malicious operations. This supplement examines the implications of that shift, including the need for layered airspace awareness and changes to public safety planning, partnerships, procedures, and information-sharing practices as Part 108 and the supporting UTM ecosystem mature.^{10,11,12,13}

What Is Part 108, and Why Does It Matter?

Most commercial drones flying today operate under FAA Part 107, a set of rules that have been in place since 2016. Part 107 established a standardized framework for routine commercial and other non-recreational drone operations within the NAS, subject to specific safety and operating requirements. One of its primary limitations requires pilots to keep their aircraft within sight, known as visual line of sight (VLOS).^{14,15}

That restriction has been one of the primary barriers to large-scale drone delivery, long-distance infrastructure inspection, and other commercial applications that require drones to travel farther than a pilot can see. Part 108, *Normalizing Unmanned Aircraft Systems Beyond Visual Line of Sight Operations*, is the FAA's proposed framework for addressing that barrier. When finalized, it will establish a standardized regulatory framework for conducting BVLOS operations, replacing today's patchwork of waivers, exemptions, and operating requirements with more consistent criteria for routine and scalable operations.^{16,17} Additionally, while Part 108 defines how drones may operate beyond visual line of sight, [Part 146](#) further defines *how those operations are digitally coordinated* through supporting UTM services.

In this environment, drone operations will occur within a digitally coordinated airspace, changing how public safety agencies maintain awareness, coordinate operations and distinguish legitimate activity from potential threats.

The Scale of Change

The FAA estimates that more than 400,000 commercial and other non-recreational drones are currently active in the United States, with the fleet expected to grow in the coming years.¹⁸ Under current Part 107 requirements, most operations must remain within visual line of sight of the pilot or visual observer.¹⁹ Part 108 removes that constraint for qualified operators. The practical result will be a significant increase in drone activity across urban, suburban, and rural areas, including airspace surrounding critical infrastructure and large-scale events.

For public safety agencies, this increase in operational density matters as much as any individual threat. When only a handful of drones are operating near a large-scale gathering or special event, an unauthorized aircraft is more likely to stand out. As BVLOS operations expand under Part 108, the number of legitimate drone operations is expected to increase significantly. Although the proposed framework is intended to improve identification, accountability, and coordination for authorized BVLOS operators, public safety agencies will still face a more complex operating environment. As the volume of legitimate operations increases, distinguishing unauthorized or malicious activity from authorized operations will become increasingly difficult. Doing so effectively will require greater situational awareness, access to reliable operational information, and effective coordination with UTM service providers.^{20,21}

The public safety challenge will be maintaining timely awareness across a busy, digitally managed low-altitude airspace.

Where Things Stand

The FAA published the Part 108 proposed rule in August 2025. A public comment period closed, was reopened, and closed again in early 2026.²² As of this publication, the final rule has not been issued. An executive order directed publication of a final rule within 240 days, as appropriate; that timeline has passed without a final rule, reflecting the complexity and sensitivity of the issues involved.²³ The final rule is widely expected in 2026, but implementation will take additional time as the commercial ecosystem of drone service providers develops.²⁴

The period before full implementation of Part 108 represents a critical opportunity for public safety agencies to prepare for this new operating environment. Understanding the operational impacts, identifying capability gaps, informing policy discussions, and developing the necessary response frameworks must occur before these changes become the new baseline for drone operations.

Global Lessons: Why Operational Visibility Matters

International UTM frameworks recognize that effective drone integration requires appropriate information-sharing mechanisms to support safety, security, and incident response missions.^{25,26} The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) UTM framework identifies information, such as UAS operator details, aircraft identification, position, velocity, planned trajectory, and performance capabilities, as important elements for maintaining airspace awareness and government oversight.²⁷

As UTM ecosystems mature and drone operations become increasingly automated and distributed, timely access to relevant operational information will become ever more important for public safety and security. Agencies responsible for protecting critical infrastructure, large-scale events, and populated areas will need the ability to rapidly distinguish authorized operations from potentially unsafe or malicious activity and coordinate effectively with other airspace stakeholders.

As Part 108 and the supporting Part 146 UTM framework mature, they are expected to improve information sharing, operational coordination, and situational awareness across the low-altitude airspace by bringing more operators into a common digital coordination environment.

The New Environment: Implications for Public Safety

Historically, many agencies have viewed UAS programs through the lens of aircraft, pilots, and individual missions. The future BVLOS environment requires a broader airspace management approach. Public safety agencies will need to manage not only their own drone operations, but also the larger ecosystem of commercial operators, automated aircraft, service providers, and digital coordination platforms operating within their communities.²⁸ Four operational shifts are expected to have the greatest impact on how public safety agencies maintain awareness and respond to an increasingly complex UAS environment.

1) Traditional Assumptions About Operator Location Will Change

Currently, when a drone is detected near an event or critical infrastructure, one of the most effective responses is to locate the operator, who is typically within visual range of the drone. That operator can be approached, identified, and either instructed to land or detained if necessary.

Under Part 108, this approach will often not work. Authorized BVLOS operators may be miles away, monitoring their aircraft from a remote facility.²⁹ For autonomous operations, where the drone follows a pre-programmed route with minimal human involvement, there may be no operator actively monitoring the aircraft. Ground teams responding to a detected drone near a venue will no longer be able to assume that finding the operator is a viable near-term option.³⁰

This represents more than a procedural change; it alters a foundational assumption underlying many public safety counter-UAS response models. Existing protocols to identify, locate, and engage an operator will need to evolve for an environment where drone operations may be remote, automated, or managed through distributed systems.

2) Operational Awareness Will Depend on Integrating Multiple Information Sources

Under current FAA rules, most drones operating in U.S. airspace that require registration must broadcast a Remote ID signal, which functions much like a digital license plate by transmitting identifying information about the aircraft, its location, and its control station.³¹ This broadcast capability operates locally through radio-frequency communications, allowing nearby receivers to detect compliant drones without relying on internet connectivity.³² Remote ID provides an important tool for identifying authorized drone activity, but it represents only one source of operational information.

As BVLOS operations expand under future regulatory frameworks, including anticipated Part 108 operations, authorized operators are expected to continue broadcasting Remote ID while participating in network-connected UTM ecosystems that rely on cellular communications, digital services, and third-party providers.^{33,34} Together, these capabilities are intended to improve operational awareness by providing richer information about authorized drone operations across greater distances than is practical through visual observation alone.

The expansion of these capabilities also changes how public safety agencies build situational awareness.³⁵ Instead of primarily relying on visual observation or locating nearby operators, agencies will need to integrate information from multiple sources, including Remote ID, UTM services, flight intent information, aircraft identification, and other operational data, to understand activity occurring within the low-altitude airspace.³⁶

For event security and public safety operations, no single source of information should be viewed as a definitive indicator of whether a drone is authorized or threatening.³⁷ A drone without an available Remote ID signal could represent a technical failure, a non-compliant operator, or a deliberate attempt to avoid detection.³⁸ Likewise, the presence of a Remote ID signal alone does not eliminate the need for operational assessment. As recommended in prior white papers in this series, layered detection, combining Remote ID, RF detection, radar, optical sensors, operational coordination, and established response protocols, remains essential for maintaining situational awareness and supporting informed response decisions.

3) Information Sharing and Operational Coordination Will Become Increasingly Important

One of the most significant operational changes for public safety agencies will be the growing role of UTM services and third-party providers in coordinating drone operations and sharing operational information. These systems are intended to create a more connected operating environment where authorized drone activity can be more effectively understood and coordinated.^{39,40,41}

As BVLOS operations expand under future regulatory frameworks, including anticipated Part 108 operations, operational information associated with authorized UAS flights* is expected to become available through UTM services and other digital coordination systems.⁴² These capabilities are intended to improve operational awareness and support scalable management of higher-volume drone operations. For public safety agencies, the priority will be ensuring appropriate access to this information and integrating it into operational planning, incident response, and real-time decision-making.⁴³

During a counter-UAS response at a large-scale gathering, critical infrastructure site, or other security event, personnel may be assessing multiple drones operating within the same airspace. Some may represent authorized BVLOS operations, while others may be unauthorized, unsafe, or potentially malicious. Rapidly distinguishing between these activities will depend not only on access to operational information, but also on established information-sharing processes, clearly defined coordination mechanisms, and the ability to incorporate available data into a common operating picture.⁴⁴

Supporting this transition, proposed Part 146 introduces third-party service providers responsible for supporting UTM services. As these services mature, public safety agencies will need to understand not only what operational information is available, but also how that information is managed, validated, shared, and incorporated into time-sensitive operational decisions. Governance, accountability, and emergency coordination processes will be essential as low-altitude airspace becomes more connected and operationally complex.^{45,46}

International UTM frameworks, including the ICAO UTM model, similarly recognize timely access to relevant operational information as an important component of safety, security, and incident response.⁴⁷ Ensuring public safety requirements are incorporated into future BVLOS and UTM implementation efforts will be essential to realizing the full benefits of these systems while maintaining effective operational coordination.

4) Airspace Rules Will Continue to Evolve

Future BVLOS frameworks, including anticipated Part 108 operations, may introduce new approaches for managing interactions among aircraft operating in shared airspace.⁴⁸ UAS are generally required to yield to crewed aircraft today. However, expanded BVLOS operations near infrastructure corridors (e.g. power lines, pipelines, and railways), may introduce new operating assumptions that place greater reliance on detect-and-avoid capabilities and electronic identification, supported by aircraft awareness technologies and operational coordination.^{49,50}

* Operational information includes, but is not limited to flight intent, authorization status, aircraft identification, and other relevant operational data.

These same low-altitude environments are frequently used for public safety aviation missions.[†] Unlike routine commercial operations, these missions may occur with limited advance notice and in dynamic environments. As BVLOS operations expand, public safety agencies will need to assess how evolving airspace management approaches, identification capabilities, and coordination processes may affect mission planning and operational procedures. Maintaining effective coordination between commercial operators, public safety aviation assets, and UTM service providers will remain important as low-altitude airspace becomes more complex.

Key Considerations for Public Safety

The preceding sections described how Part 108 and supporting UTM capabilities are expected to reshape the UAS environment. This section focuses on what those changes mean in practice for public safety agencies and the capabilities, coordination, and planning needed to operate effectively in a more connected and increasingly active low-altitude airspace.

The Cover Problem: Distinguishing Legitimate Operations from Malicious Activity

One of the most significant risk dynamics associated with expanded BVLOS operations is what can be referred to as the “cover problem.” When the skies near a major event or large-scale gathering contain only a small number of drones, unauthorized activity may be easier to identify and investigate. As authorized BVLOS operations expand across sectors, security personnel may need to distinguish between a much larger number of legitimate, non-compliant, and potentially malicious UAS operations. Authorized activities could include delivery services, media operations, infrastructure monitoring, and public safety missions.^{51,52}

Prior white papers identified that sophisticated threat actors have demonstrated awareness of security measures and adapted their tactics to exploit operational gaps. A future environment with higher volumes of authorized drone activity and increased dependence on digital identification and coordination systems may create opportunities for adversaries to mask activity among routine operations.^{53,54} Security planners will need threat assessment and discrimination protocols specifically designed for higher-density UAS environments, where detecting a drone will increasingly be the easiest part; determining authorization, behavior, and intent becomes the more significant operational challenge.

UTM Enhances Public Safety Airspace Awareness

Emerging UTM capabilities present important opportunities for public safety agencies. As Part 146 and supporting UTM services mature, standardized operational data and interoperable digital services could improve visibility into authorized UAS activity, support airspace deconfliction, and strengthen coordination among commercial operators, public safety aviation assets, and counter-UAS systems.

[†] Public safety aviation missions include, but are not limited to, law enforcement operations, emergency response, disaster assessments, infrastructure inspections, and other time-sensitive missions.

Service providers are already demonstrating capabilities that combine operational information, such as Remote ID, flight authorization information, and surveillance data, to provide a more complete picture of low-altitude airspace activity. As these capabilities mature, they could improve operational awareness and coordination, reduce duplication of effort, and support greater interoperability across jurisdictions and technology platforms. For public safety agencies, these benefits could reduce coordination burdens and improve operational awareness, while also strengthening both routine UAS operations and counter-UAS activities during large-scale events and emergency response operations.

However, UTM data should complement rather than replace other airspace awareness and response capabilities. UTM services depend on communications networks, digital infrastructure, and the timely exchange of operational data.⁵⁵ Technical disruptions, network outages, degraded communications, or temporary data availability issues could affect visibility into authorized UAS operations and complicate public safety decision-making during time-sensitive incidents.

As UTM becomes an important component of low-altitude airspace infrastructure, resilience and cybersecurity will be critical to reducing the risk of disruption, unauthorized access, or data manipulation. International UTM frameworks similarly recognize contingency management, system resilience, and information-sharing procedures as important components of mature UTM ecosystems. While the most immediate UAS threats are likely to involve readily available commercial drones operated outside authorized frameworks, public safety agencies should recognize that no single source of airspace information is immune from failure or degradation.⁵⁶

Effective airspace awareness should therefore continue to rely on a layered approach that combines UTM data with Remote ID, RF detection, radar, visual confirmation, operational coordination, and established response protocols. Planning for situations in which operational information is delayed, incomplete, unavailable, or inconsistent will help ensure resilient public safety operations as UTM capabilities continue to evolve.⁵⁷

Public Safety Drone Programs Must Prepare for a More Connected Operating Environment

Law enforcement, fire, and emergency management agencies are rapidly expanding their own drone programs. Part 108 and the supporting UTM ecosystem are expected to provide significant operational benefits for these agencies, including improved coordination with other airspace users and more efficient integration of Drone-as-First-Responder (DFR). As these capabilities mature, agencies should also prepare for operating within a more connected digital ecosystem where aircraft, software, communications networks, and third-party service providers play an important role in day-to-day operations.^{58,59}

DFR programs represent one of the most significant public safety applications likely to expand within a BVLOS-enabled environment.⁶⁰ As these programs transition from individual deployments to more routine and automated response models, agencies will benefit from improved airspace coordination and operational awareness while also needing to address evolving considerations involving cybersecurity, data governance, and integration with other authorized UAS activity occurring in the same operating environment.⁶¹

Beyond UTM services, modern public safety drone programs rely on a broader digital ecosystem of fleet management, mission planning, communications, data storage, and other connected services.^{62,63} These technologies can improve operational coordination and situational awareness, but they may also handle sensitive

information related to emergency response, critical infrastructure, tactical deployments, and special event security. As agencies expand BVLOS and DFR capabilities, understanding and managing this broader ecosystem will become as important as managing the aircraft themselves.

Federal agencies, including the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), have previously highlighted cybersecurity and data security concerns associated with certain foreign-manufactured UAS platforms, particularly those linked to countries of concern.⁶⁴ Agencies should view cybersecurity, trusted technologies, and data governance as foundational components of modern UAS programs by evaluating the security and resilience of aircraft, software, communications pathways, data storage, and third-party service providers before integrating these capabilities into mission operations.⁶⁵

Distributed UTM Architectures Require New Planning Approaches

Future BVLOS frameworks are expected to rely on a distributed ecosystem of service providers, operators, and data-sharing capabilities rather than a single centralized airspace management system.⁶⁶ While this architecture is intended to support scalable drone operations, it also changes how public safety agencies access, integrate, and validate operational information during time-sensitive incidents.⁶⁷

In a distributed environment, operational information may exist across multiple systems, providers, and stakeholders.⁶⁸ While these systems are designed to exchange information, public safety agencies responding to a security incident or large-scale event may require clear processes to access a complete and timely understanding of authorized UAS activity.

For event security planners seeking a common operating picture, this represents an important planning consideration. Future preparedness efforts should address not only how information from multiple sources will be integrated, validated, and shared with public safety decision-makers, but also how those processes will be exercised and sustained during time-sensitive operations.⁶⁹

Recommendations for Public Safety Leaders

The following recommendations are organized by role and priority and are intended to help public safety leaders prepare for the operational changes associated with Part 108, emerging UTM capabilities, and a connected low-altitude airspace. They focus on practical steps agencies can take to maintain situational awareness, strengthen coordination, and integrate new capabilities while preserving resilient response operations.

Before the Final Rule Is Published

- **Participate in the rulemaking and implementation process.** The period before final implementation provides an opportunity for public safety agencies to identify operational requirements and inform future UAS integration efforts.⁷⁰ Agencies should ensure public safety considerations are addressed, including: 1) access to relevant UAS operational, authorization, and coordination information to support incident response; 2) integration of public safety aviation requirements within UTM coordination and deconfliction processes; and 3) clearly defined contingency procedures and notification pathways during UTM disruptions or system failures.

- **Assess impacts to public safety aviation operations.** Public safety aviation units should evaluate how evolving BVLOS operations, including shielded-area operations, detect-and-avoid requirements, and airspace coordination processes, may affect low-altitude missions near infrastructure corridors and other shared operating environments.^{71,72} Agencies should incorporate these considerations into flight planning, training, and coordination procedures as BVLOS operations become more common.
- **Begin UTM integration planning.** Agencies should assess how their UAS programs, aviation units, emergency operations centers, real-time operations centers, and command centers will interface with future UTM ecosystems.⁷³ Planning should address operational information-sharing requirements, coordination with authorized operators and UTM service providers, and procedures for incorporating UTM data into a common operating picture. Agencies should also evaluate how emerging UTM capabilities can enhance airspace deconfliction, operational coordination, and situational awareness as higher volumes of BVLOS operations become routine.
- **Address public safety prioritization requirements.** Prioritization frameworks should account not only for aircraft separation and airspace access, but also mission context. Emergency response, disaster operations, law enforcement activities, and critical infrastructure incidents may require different levels of visibility, coordination, and prioritization than routine commercial operations.⁷⁴ Clearly established coordination and prioritization processes will help ensure emergency operations can be rapidly recognized and effectively deconflicted from routine commercial activity, including delivery, inspection, and other non-emergency operations.
- **Establish relationships before an incident occurs.** Agencies responsible for major events, critical infrastructure protection, or emergency response should identify future coordination pathways with commercial operators, UTM service providers, federal partners, and neighboring jurisdictions before real-time operational decisions are required.

In Advance of Large-Scale Events

- **Update UAS threat assessment, airspace awareness, and response protocols.** As authorized UAS operations increase and UTM capabilities mature, event security plans and operational procedures should be updated to incorporate new sources of operational information, including UTM services and Remote ID, while recognizing their limitations.⁷⁵ Agencies should evaluate how higher volumes of authorized drone activity, expanded information-sharing capabilities, and evolving coordination processes affect threat assessment, operational decision-making, and response procedures. Protocols should continue to emphasize layered airspace awareness and the use of multiple information sources to distinguish authorized, unauthorized, and potentially malicious activity.⁷⁶
- **Develop contingency plans for UTM system and information disruptions.** Large-scale gathering and special event security plans should account for scenarios where UTM-related information is unavailable, delayed, incomplete, or inconsistent.⁷⁷ UAS response operations should maintain the ability to assess and respond to potential threats using multiple sources of information rather than relying on any single data stream.

- **Update operator identification and response procedures.** Response protocols built around locating a nearby drone operator should be reassessed as BVLOS operations expand. In future environments, operators may be located far from the protected site or operate through centralized management systems, requiring updated procedures for attribution, validation, coordination, and response.
- **Integrate UTM Information into the common operating picture.** Event security operations centers should incorporate UTM-related information, including unusual operational patterns, unexpected flight activity near event venues, data availability issues, or other anomalies, alongside traditional UAS detection and security information sources. This will require coordination across aviation, physical security, cybersecurity, intelligence, emergency management, and other operational partners.

Ongoing Priorities

- **Continue addressing UAS supply chain and cybersecurity risks.** Agencies should continue evaluating the security of their drone ecosystems, including platform origin, software dependencies, third-party services, data management practices, and connectivity risks. Agencies should also ensure procurement, cybersecurity, and operational policies account for the expanded role of connected platforms, UTM services, and data exchange.⁷⁸
- **Train for the future operating environment.** Tabletop exercises, operational training, and large-scale exercises should incorporate future BVLOS operating conditions, including higher volumes of authorized drone activity, integration of UTM and Remote ID information into operational decision-making, and coordination with commercial operators and service providers. Exercises should also include scenarios involving degraded or unavailable operational data, unauthorized drones operating within otherwise legitimate traffic patterns, and the use of multiple information sources to support threat assessment, operational coordination, and incident response in complex low-altitude airspace environments.⁷⁹
- **Develop sustainable public safety UAS programs.** Agencies should evaluate whether existing drone programs have the governance, training, staffing, cybersecurity practices, and operational policies necessary to function in a more complex airspace environment. Future success will depend not only on aircraft capabilities, but on building mature programs capable of coordinating across aviation, emergency management, cybersecurity, and public safety partners.⁸⁰
- **Build interagency and federal partnerships before they are needed.** Most state and local agencies will continue to focus on detection, identification, coordination, and reporting, while certain counter-UAS mitigation authorities remain limited to designated federal agencies. Clearly defined relationships, communication pathways, escalation processes, information-sharing procedures, and operational workflows should be established, tested, and exercised before an incident occurs.⁸¹
- **Evaluate emerging UTM services and integration opportunities.** As UTM capabilities mature, agencies should evaluate emerging operational services that support airspace awareness, deconfliction, operational coordination, and integration with existing public safety technologies. Early engagement with these capabilities will help agencies identify opportunities to improve safety, efficiency, and interoperability, while informing future procurement and operational planning.

Conclusion

If implemented as anticipated, Part 108 will represent one of the most significant changes to U.S. drone airspace management since the expansion of commercial drone operations. It will bring substantial benefits, including more efficient delivery services, improved infrastructure inspection, expanded commercial capabilities, and enhanced emergency response applications. It will also create a more connected and operationally complex low-altitude airspace environment that public safety agencies across the country will need to understand and prepare for.

The transition period before full implementation provides an important opportunity for public safety agencies to prepare for the future UAS operating environment. The rulemaking process is ongoing, the commercial UTM ecosystem continues to develop, and many of the operational procedures, coordination mechanisms, and information-sharing processes that will define implementation are still being established.

The continued development of reliable UTM capabilities will be an important component of maintaining safety, security, and operational awareness within a complex low-altitude airspace environment. Public safety agencies that engage early, through organizations such as DRONERESPONDERS, federal partners, industry stakeholders, UTM service providers, public safety associations, and rulemaking processes, can ensure operational requirements are understood and incorporated as these systems mature. Establishing relationships, information-sharing processes, coordination mechanisms, and response frameworks now will strengthen readiness for BVLOS operations.

The next phase of public safety UAS readiness will require agencies to move beyond building drone programs to managing a digitally connected operational ecosystem. Success will depend on the ability to maintain a common operating picture, coordinate across organizations, securely exchange operational information, and integrate public safety requirements into emerging UAS management frameworks.⁸²

The agencies best positioned for the future BVLOS environment will be those that begin preparing before these changes become the operational baseline. By engaging early, integrating emerging UTM capabilities, and strengthening the partnerships and processes needed to operate in a more connected airspace, public safety agencies can help shape an ecosystem that is not only more efficient, but also safer, more resilient, and better equipped to support the missions they perform every day.

Staying Engaged as the UAS Environment Evolves

In addition to monitoring FAA actions related to Part 108, Part 146, and UTM implementation, public safety agencies should maintain awareness of the broader set of organizations helping shape the evolving UAS environment. This can include monitoring policy positions, regulatory comments, emerging technologies and operational practices, and opportunities for engagement. Relevant organizations include, but are not limited to:

- [DRONERESPONDERS](#)
- [Commercial Drone Alliance](#)
- [Drone Advocacy Alliance](#)
- [Law Enforcement Drone Association \(LEAD\)](#)
- [Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International \(AUVSI\)](#)
- [Global UTM Association \(GUTMA\)](#)
- [Airborne Public Safety Association \(APSA\)](#)

Maintaining relationships with organizations representing public safety, industry, and the broader UAS ecosystem can help stakeholders identify emerging developments early, understand differing stakeholder perspectives, and ensure public safety requirements are considered as the regulatory and operational environment continues to evolve.

This Emerging Risks White Paper is a collaboration between the Center for Internet Security (CIS) and [DRONERESPONDERS](#) with review and input from [Aerisq Solutions](#).

Resources

- [CIS: Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\): Evolving Risks to Large-Scale Public Gatherings](#)
- [CIS: UAS Evolving Risks to Large-Scale Public Gatherings Cyber Risks Companion Guide](#)
- [CISA Best Practices for Protecting Against the UAS Threat](#)
- [CISA Cybersecurity Best Practices for Operating Commercial UAS](#)
- [CISA Safe Handling Considerations for Downed Unmanned Aircraft Systems](#)
- [CISA Secure Your Drone: Privacy and Data Protection Guidance](#)
- [CISA Stadium Spotlight: Connected Devices and Integrated Security Considerations](#)
- [CISA Suspicious Unmanned Aircraft System Activity Guidance](#)
- [CISA Unmanned Aircraft System Detection Technology Guidance](#)
- [CISA/FBI: Cybersecurity Guidance for Chinese-Manufactured UAS](#)
- [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) Blue UAS for First Responders](#)
- [DHS Drone as First Responder \(DFR\) TechNote](#)
- [DOJ/SLATT Trends in Unmanned Aerial Vehicles \(UAVs\) and Their Implications for Law Enforcement](#)
- [Executive Order 14307: Unleashing American Drone Dominance](#)
- [FAA Drone Integration: Concept of Operations](#)
- [FAA Law Enforcement Guidance for Suspected Unauthorized UAS Operations](#)
- [FAA Part 108 NPRM: Normalizing UAS Beyond Visual Line of Sight Operations](#)
- [FAA Part 146: Automated Data Service Providers](#)
- [FAA BVLOS Operations Fact Sheet](#)
- [FAA Public Safety Small Drone Playbook](#)
- [ICAO UTM Framework](#)
- [National Counterterrorism Center \(NCTC\) Unmanned Aircraft System: Recognizing Malicious Modification](#)
- [SAFECOM Uncrewed Aircraft System Resource Guide for Public Safety and Life Support](#)

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