

Hannah Thomas

Training and Exercise Specialist, Maryland-NCR Emergency Response
System

NON-COMPETITIVE DIVISION

Strengthening Collaboration and Coordination through the Implementation of Small Unmanned Aerial Systems (sUAS) in Montgomery County

In 2018, the Maryland-National Capital Region Emergency Response System Steering Committee identified small Unmanned Aerial Systems (sUAS) as a funding priority for capability development. To achieve this capability for the public safety agencies in Montgomery County, Maryland, a workgroup was established consisting of representatives from the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD), Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS), and the Montgomery County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (OEMHS). This provided collaboration opportunities for policy development, equipment specification, and the coordination of future training.

The group continued to gain momentum in 2020, with MCFRS and OEMHS gaining FEMA approval. Both agencies then began the process of procuring equipment. All three agencies are actively crafting and implementing training programs to operationalize sUAS operations for emergency response throughout Montgomery County.

While the FRZ covers only the lower 1/3 of Montgomery County, this area contains more than half of the County's population. To add to the complexity of this project, a majority of Montgomery County falls within the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Flight Restricted Zone (FRZ) around Washington, D.C. The public safety agencies within this zone must work with the FAA to obtain waivers that allow them to operate sUAS within this airspace. To date, MCPD and MCFRS have already received a waiver, leading the way for other agencies within their jurisdiction.

This poster will showcase practical sUAS experience and knowledge. The poster will address a wide array of topics that are relevant for public safety agencies looking to grow their sUAS program.

Presentation Theme: sUAS use during routine and unexpected response efforts by Law Enforcement, Fire, and Emergency Management agencies in Montgomery County, MD.

Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research: Michael Ryman, Emergency Response Planner, Maryland-National Capital Region Emergency Response System;
Hannah Thomas, Training and Exercise Specialist, Maryland-National Capital Region Emergency Response System; Montgomery County Police Department; Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services; Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

Funding: UASI