



Roxana Kennedy
Chief of Police

CHULA VISTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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POLICE MEDIA ADVISORY

Date: March 10, 2022
To: San Diego Media
From: Chula Vista Police Department
Contact: Lieutenant Miriam Foxx
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Subject: Chula Vista Police Drone as First Responder Program Reaches 10,000 missions!

Message: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Chula Vista Police Department Drone as First Responder (DFR) program reached a significant milestone this week when its DFR program surpassed 10,000 missions.

This announcement marks the culmination of years of hard work, collaboration, and a desire to provide our community with the highest level of professionalism, safety, and transparency.

The DFR program is used during an active response to an emergency or other calls for police assistance and enhances our public safety response. Since the program's inception, the drone was first on-scene to over 5,300 incidents and assisted in the apprehension of more than 1,140 offenders.

DFR has responded to countless calls for service, such as finding lost children, disturbance calls, fires, traffic collisions, domestic violence, and weapons calls. The DFR program is critical to the safety of our citizens. The program focuses on de-escalating incidents by providing officers more time to assess dangerous situations and better information to make decisions. This helps reduce the need to use force.

DFR History: In November 2018, the Chula Vista Police Department was selected by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to be a part of the FAA's Integration Pilot Project (IPP). The department was the only law enforcement member to participate. The IPP is a federal initiative designed to help integrate drones into the National Air Space. Here are additional highlights:

- In May 2019, Chula Vista Police became the first law enforcement agency in the country to be authorized by the FAA to fly Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) in an urban area. FAA regulations usually require drone operators to maintain a visual line of sight of drones at all times while in flight. The BVLOS authorization allowed the department to fly drones to emergency incidents up to three miles away from the launch site, beyond visual line of sight. This allowed the department's drones to fly as first responders to many more emergencies across the community, often arriving long before officers on the ground.

- In August 2019, the FAA authorized the department to open a second launch site, greatly expanding the area its drones could cover. The second launch site allowed the department to provide DFR services to about 33% of the city's geographic location. Due to its density and commercial activity, it is responsible for about 70% of the priority calls for service.
- In April 2020, the department became the first police agency in the nation to test and successfully use Live911, a revolutionary software that live-streams 911 calls directly to officers in the field. Drone operators and officers can monitor Live911 to get a "jump-start" on emergency calls, reducing the department's response time. The Live911 program also provides quality information to responding officers for enhanced decision-making. The ability to hear a caller's voice, rather than only getting an electronic description through Computer Aided Dispatch systems, can create faster and safer outcomes for everyone involved.
- In November 2020, Chula Vista Police received FAA approval that allowed two drones to fly in close proximity airspace for a single incident. The department is currently the only law enforcement agency in the country to receive this authorization. This allows drones to stay longer at the scene of an emergency incident and provide real-time information to first responders.

Chula Vista Police Chief Roxana Kennedy describes how the DFR program helps save lives and maintain a safe community. "As a Chief of Police, my primary concerns are the safety of the public and the safety of my officers. Since 2018, the DFR program has made an incredible difference in how we respond to emergency calls for service. It allows officers to see what is happening at a scene, including what risk may or may not exist before they round the corner and are thrust into a dangerous situation. The DFR program makes our officers, our citizens, and even the subjects we encounter safer. In my opinion, drones are immensely important to the future of public safety and are a critical de-escalation tool."

The Chula Vista Police Department is excited to share this incredible moment in our department's history. We are committed to providing diverse policing strategies through the proactive use of technology, data analytics, and firsthand interactions with our citizens. This program allows us to ensure a safe community environment that respects our citizen's rights and expectations.

[The department logs all drone flights and makes its flight data and flight maps available to the community on its website.](#)

Media are instructed to direct all inquiries to Lt. Miriam Foxx @ 619-476-2452 or mfoxx@chulavistapd.org.

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Date/Time: 03-10-2022 13:00 PM