

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Use Policy

Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

Updated 20250813

1. Purpose

Only authorized individuals are permitted to fly Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)—including drones—within or above the Arboretum in accordance with City of Boston law for public parks and regulations set by Harvard University. To ensure safety, research integrity, and visitor experience, this policy governs the use of UAVs at the Arboretum.

This policy is a local extension of the [Harvard University UAV Policy](#) (effective December 2017) and applies specifically to flights occurring on or above Arnold Arboretum property.

2. Definitions

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV):

Any device used, intended to be used, or designed to fly in the air without direct human control from within or on the aircraft. UAVs include, but are not limited to:

- Drones
- Model aircraft
- Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)
- Rockets and weather balloons

Operator:

Any individual or entity responsible for the control or operation of a UAV.

Third Party:

Any individual or organization not affiliated with Harvard University as a student, faculty, staff member, or approved vendor. UAV operation by Third Parties is prohibited.

Approved Vendor:

An individual or organization authorized by Harvard to perform services on its behalf, subject to the same conditions as Harvard affiliates.

3. Permitted Use of UAVs

UAV operations are **strictly limited** at the Arnold Arboretum. The following categories of UAV use may be considered for approval:

- **Research Use** conducted by Harvard faculty, students, or approved collaborators
- **Educational Use** that supports Harvard's academic mission
- **University-Sponsored Projects** including media, mapping, or landscape documentation
- **Approved Vendor Services** contracted by Harvard for Arboretum-related operations

Recreational, hobbyist, or general commercial UAV use is prohibited.

Each permitted use must:

- Serve the mission of the Arnold Arboretum and/or Harvard University
 - Adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws
 - Comply with Harvard University's [2017 UAV Policy](#)
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4. Requirements for Approval

All UAV operations must be reviewed and approved in advance. Operators must submit the following documentation **at least two weeks prior to the proposed flight date**:

1. Purpose of Flight

- Must comply with Section 3, above

2. Proposed Flight Plan

- Including personnel/operators, location(s), flight path, elevation, duration, equipment used, and safety measures

3. Valid FAA Certification

- [Part 107 Certification](#) or other relevant authorization

4. Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC) Authorization

- Due to the Arboretum's proximity to Logan Airport, [LAANC Authorization](#) is required.

5. Certificate of Insurance

- Including general liability coverage of at least \$2 million.
 - Arboretum staff members can be covered by a short-term UAV policy carried by the Arboretum. Please reach out to Danny Schissler for more information.
- Naming "President and Fellows of Harvard College" as additional insured
- Sent to: Danny Schissler, 1300 Centre Street, Boston, MA 02131

Submission Instructions

Send all documentation for UAV flight approval to:

Danny Schissler

Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

Email: Dschissler@fas.harvard.edu

Deadline: At least 10 business days (2 weeks) in advance of the requested flight date

5. Additional Conditions

- Flights may be restricted during public events, peak visitation times, sensitive research activities, or activities related to the care of the living collections and landscape.
 - Operators will be issued an "Authorized UAV Operator" tag which must be worn at all times while flying. Operators may print the tag themselves and provide a lanyard/holder or may request the Arboretum provide on free of charge.
 - Operators must also carry their authorization notice with them while flying (printed or saved on their mobile device).
 - Operators must avoid flying over visitors or occupied buildings.
 - The Arboretum reserves the right to impose additional site-specific conditions or deny requests at its discretion.
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6. Violations

Unauthorized UAV operations at the Arnold Arboretum may result in:

- Immediate termination of flight activity
 - Removal from the property
 - Notification of the Harvard University Police Department
 - Future restrictions on access to University property
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7. Questions and Further Information

For questions regarding UAV operations at the Arnold Arboretum, contact:

Danny Schissler

Dschissler@fas.harvard.edu

For university-wide policies, refer to the [Harvard UAV Committee](#).