



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT
INVESTIGATIVE BUREAU ORDERS

SOP 5-2

Effective: 01/10/18 Review Due: 01/10/19 Replaces: 12/07/15

5-2 AIR SUPPORT UNIT

5-2-1 Policy

The Air Support Unit will operate its aircraft in a safe and legal manner while providing surveillance services to ground units.

The Air Support Unit is an airborne unit, utilizing modified fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters to perform observation patrol, and assist ground units in apprehensions, surveillance, searches, and calls-for-service.

5-2-2 Objectives

The primary objective of the unit is Air Support by means of observational assistance in criminal apprehension. By acting as an airborne observation post, the unit directs ground units to areas of criminal activity upon observation.

In addition to its primary mission, the unit can also assist in calls-for-service, searches, traffic, or crowd observation, and other purposes where its versatility is advantageous.

5-2-3 Rules and Responsibilities

A. Surveillance

Suspected criminals and known areas of criminal activity are placed under observation by the unit for varying lengths of time. Individuals, vehicles, residences, businesses, and areas can be observed and information relayed to patrol or investigative units who can then take appropriate action.

B. Searches

Ground units are assisted by the unit in searching for lost children, missing or wanted persons, and escapees. The unit checks various locations, particularly remote areas, for abandoned stolen vehicles and car stripping activities. It also provides nighttime illumination by searchlight for crime scene or area searches as is necessary.

C. Crowd Control

The unit is used to observe civil disturbances, parades, marches, visits of dignitaries, or other events where crowd control or intelligence is necessary.



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D. Assistance to Other Agencies

Upon authority of the Narcotics Lieutenant, the unit will assist other law enforcement agencies in emergency situations or when a situation is deemed more important than the unit's assigned missions. If the request is outside the Metro Area (Belen, Los Lunas, Rio Rancho, Bernalillo) the chain of command will be contacted through the Investigative Bureau Deputy Chief.

E. Duty Assignments

1. The assigned missions for the Air Support Unit are determined by the Investigative Bureau Deputy Chief or the Special Investigations Division Commander, by considering requests and information from other sections and division commanders. It is the responsibility of the unit to ensure that the unit is assigned in the most productive and beneficial manner.
2. No unauthorized passengers shall be permitted in an aircraft assigned to APD. An unauthorized passenger is any person who is not a member of the APD, Air Support Unit, or any ride along who does not have prior approval per policy.
3. APD aircraft shall not be used to transport any person from one predetermined location to another for commercial purposes (compensation or hire). APD Aircraft may however be utilized to transport department personnel in the course of department duties provided such personnel are on-duty and conducting department/city business. This shall be approved by and at the discretion of the Division Commander or his designee.

F. Operation

1. The days off and the duty hours for the unit will be determined by the Special Investigations Division Commander.
2. Reasons preventing the aircraft from being airborne for this length of time include inclement weather, repair and maintenance, or pilot availability. Whenever the aircraft cannot be flown for one of these reasons, the crew will report to the unit supervisor, unit lieutenant or section commander (in that order) for reassignment for the remainder of the shift.
3. Mission assignments are issued periodically which reflect the flight hours and days off for the crew. Reassignment to special missions, particularly long surveillance, or other activities will be made by the unit supervisor, section lieutenant or division commander only.



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G. On-Call

1. The Air Support Unit shall be available via “on-call” status when not on regular duty times for the following but not limited to:
 - a. Surveillance for Felonious activities with existential circumstances or high profile conditions in which Air Support coverage is needed for officer safety (this includes surveillance on Individuals, vehicles, residences, businesses etc.).
 - b. Searches for lost children, missing or wanted persons, perimeter searches for felons, and escapees. The Air Unit may also be called out to assist with Search & Rescue missions provided conditions are safe to do so.
 - c. Crowd Control to assist in civil disturbances, parades, marches, dignitary visits or any event where crowd control intelligence is needed.
 - d. At the discretion of the Division Commander or Deputy Chief
2. The Air Support unit will not be called out for Misdemeanor events (unless a special circumstance is presented or falls under paragraph d. of this section).
3. Flight crews may be held over for calls (meeting section 1 criteria) provided such a hold over does not constitute a safety hazard or exceed any limits as set forth by the Federal Aviation Regulations.
4. In all cases, the Unit Supervisor (Sergeant) will be responsible for determining if a flight crew will be held over, or if a crew should be called out from home. Approval for flight crew call-outs will be based upon the available resources, weather and the conditions of the area of the call. Final decision for the call-out response will be determined by the Unit Supervisor and ultimately the “Pilot in Command” for the mission.
 - a. Unit Supervisor (Sergeant) will be notified for all Air Support Pilot Aircraft call-outs. Requests for Air Support Unit assistance during off duty hours will only be done after obtaining approval from the Air Unit Supervisor.
 - b. If Unit Supervisor cannot be reached, then the Section Lieutenant or Division Commander will be contacted (in that order).
5. The Unit Supervisor will ensure that a current “ON-CALL LIST” with contact numbers of current on-call ASU staff will always be on file with APD Dispatch/Control.



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H. Area of Assignment

The Air Support Unit will be in the air for only three reasons:

1. Flight missions
2. Training
3. City Personnel Transport (at division commander discretion)

I. Flight Routine

The following procedures are to be followed before, during, and at the termination of each flight:

1. Preflight the aircraft.
2. Check on supplies for aircraft (forms, flight logs, etc.).
3. The flight crew contacts the unit supervisor by telephone each day they are scheduled to work to advise him of any problems and to receive pertinent information.
4. The aircraft is prepared for take-off at mission starting time.
5. Communications is advised that the aircraft is in service at lift-off.
6. The pilot maintains radio contact on VHF with FAA Air Traffic control and monitors the police 800 MHz frequencies (when it does not interfere with flight operations or safe operations of the aircraft).
7. The pilot and Tactical Flight Officer shall maintain the daily flight logs, making certain that it is complete and accurate. The log contains:
 - a. Mission starting and ending time.
 - b. Hobbs clock starting and ending reading.
 - c. Crew members.
 - d. Weather condition.
 - e. All observations in which ground units are directed.
 - f. All surveillance and special missions.
 - g. Time expended and reasons for down time (weather, repairs, pilot unavailable, lunch, refueling, etc.).
8. The aircraft lands no earlier than the ending time of the mission assignment (unless doing so compromises the safety of the aircraft and crew).



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9. The aircraft is refueled. Fuel tanks are always filled when the aircraft is in hangar to prevent condensation. The pilot may keep tanks at a lower capacity should it be determined that the excessive fuel weight would compromise aircraft performance and create weight and balance concerns for a call out or the next day's mission.
10. Post-flight the aircraft.
11. The aircraft is cleaned, windows and search lights are cleaned, and coffee pot and relief containers are washed, etc.
12. Flight logs event logs, reports, and fuel logs are complete.
13. Oil changes are performed every fifty-hour period on the fixed wing.
14. Helicopter will undergo all Airworthiness Directive, 100 hour, and Progressive inspections as prescribed by American Eurocopter.

J. Aircraft Inspections

Inspections will be scheduled by the Air Support Unit Supervisor and/or Mechanic as specified in the manufacturer's maintenance manual and the Federal Aviation Regulations.

K. Unit Evaluation of Performance Effectiveness

In order to determine the value of the unit, as well as its performance and effectiveness, data is compiled, categorized, and analyzed. The data is gathered from the flight and event logs and contains the following information:

1. Maintenance costs per hour.
2. Gas and oil costs per hour.
3. Gas and oil consumption per hour.
4. Down time for weather, maintenance, and pilot unavailability.
5. Number of arrests realized by unit assistance (felony and misdemeanor).



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L. Personnel

1. The flight crew consists of a Pilot and Tactical Flight Officer. Officers wishing to become part-time Tactical Flight Officers may do so by the following selection process:
 - a. The Unit Supervisor will recruit candidates from within the Department through a written announcement.
 - b. Interested personnel shall respond by submitting a transfer request and a functional resume to Personnel/Payroll.
 - c. All TFO applicants must be sworn officers, and have no less than 5 years' experience with the Albuquerque Police Department and have no sustained disciplinary actions within the last 12 months to be considered qualified.
 - d. All qualified personnel will participate in an Oral Interview, written test and practical exercises as prescribed by Department Personnel Rules and Regulations.
 - e. The results of the Oral Interview will be forwarded to the Chief of Police and the candidate's Chain of Command along with the oral board's recommendation for his consideration.

2. Initial – Tactical Flight Officer Training
 - a. Initial Tactical Flight Officer training must be completed prior to being permanently assigned to the Air Support Unit. This training will be conducted in-house by the Air Support Unit.
 - b. Initial TFO Training will consist of a minimum of six months, excluding absences of scheduled vacation and extended leave.
 - c. The Initial TFO Training will expose the trainee to all aspects of the TFO's responsibilities and evaluate his/her aptitude for the position.
 - d. Initial TFO Training is to be conducted on the job (on-duty) by experienced ASU TFO's and APD's NMDPS Certified TFO Instructor.
 - e. The trainee must complete Initial TFO Training with a "Competent/Satisfactory" rating from the instructing ASU TFO's and certified TFO Instructor
 - f. There shall be a "trial period" of 1 year after the candidate becomes a Certified TFO in which he/she must continue to demonstrate proficiency in the operation of the aircraft equipment as well as the required TFO duties.
 - g. To maintain part-time status as a TFO with the APD Air Support Unit, the TFO must maintain currency by working a minimum of 2 shifts per month with the ASU (as scheduled by the unit supervisor).

3. Only upon authorization by the Unit Supervisor, Section Lieutenant, or the Division Commander, may anyone other than personnel assigned to the unit, ride in the police aircraft. When such authorization is given, the individual, if other than an APD officer, will read and sign the liability waiver form provided for this purpose.



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4. Section Lieutenant

- a. The Section Lieutenant, with input from the Special Investigations Division Commander, will develop and set the goals for the unit members.
- b. The Section Lieutenant is responsible for the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Air Support Unit.
- c. The Section Lieutenant will ensure that personnel assigned to the unit have received all the training necessary to operate the department aircraft and stay current through necessary updated training.
- d. The Section Lieutenant will be responsible for assigning personnel throughout the unit to accomplish the division goals.

5. Unit Supervisor

- a. Assign unit personnel to the flight.
- b. Assure that daily line-ups, weekly time sheets, and monthly rosters are submitted correctly.
- c. Inspect and evaluate the daily flight logs and compile them into monthly reports.
- d. Evaluate the oil and fuel consumption logs for gas and oil consumption per hour figures to maintain an updated cost analysis and to determine the amount of oil and gas remaining in the storage tanks.
- e. Assure that fifty-hour oil changes and one hundred-hour inspections are performed on the aircraft.
- f. Arrange and schedule for any repairs or maintenance on aircraft.
- g. Contact the appropriate company or firm for repair or replacement of defective parts that are under warranty.
- h. Maintain accurate ledgers of expenses and records of transactions concerning the aircraft, hangar, or other related items. Assure that the aircraft is operated in strict accordance to FAA regulations as well as department regulations.
- i. Maintain liaison with FAA personnel to ensure mutual cooperation and understanding.
- j. Assure that all unit personnel are kept informed on all section, division, and department orders and memoranda.
- k. Maintain current pilot roster.
- l. Ensure that personnel assigned to the Air Support Unit have all necessary training required to operate the department aircraft. Any deficiencies will be immediately reported to the Section Lieutenant.
- m. Perform any other supervisory duties required in order to ensure the smooth operation of the Air Support Unit.



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6. Pilots

The primary duty and responsibility of the pilot is to ensure safe operation of the aircraft. His/her duties include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Perform complete preflight inspection of aircraft:
- b. Preflight shall be conducted as prescribed for each aircraft by the manufacturer and as directed in the Pilot's Operation Handbook assigned to that aircraft.
- c. Check that all communications equipment is working properly.
- d. Adhere to all FAA regulations and policies during take-off, while flying patrol patterns, and during landings.
- e. Monitor the appropriate VHF channels to maintain contact with the FAA control tower for pertinent flight information. Monitor (when safe to do so), with the Tactical Flight Officer, 800 MHz radio to keep informed of police activities.
- f. Maintain constant vigilance of other aircraft, altitude, air speed, and all other conditions affecting the safe operation of the aircraft.
- g. Maintain the assigned surveillance area and pattern.
- h. Coordinate flight patterns and maneuvers with observer for maximum observational effectiveness.
- i. Perform complete post-flight inspection of aircraft:
- j. Assure that fuel logs, records, etc. pertaining to the operation of the aircraft are completed. If maintenance is needed, a squawk sheet should be completed and left for the unit mechanic.
- k. Remain well informed of all FAA regulations, policies, procedures, and changes or alterations in them. Keep unit supervisor advised of any problems with aircraft or equipment.
- l. When a safety issue comes up during flight, the pilot will have the final say as to how the flight will be handled.

7. Tactical Flight Officer

The duties and responsibilities of the Tactical Flight Officer are as follows:

- a. Obtain assignment and other pertinent information from unit supervisor or unit commander, prior to each tour of duty.
- b. Assure that the aircraft is properly equipped with the necessary logs, forms, maps, and other items or equipment necessary for proper completion of the flight.
- c. Assure that Communications is advised that the aircraft is in-service (airborne) and have the aircraft's call sign assigned to the TFO's man #. While airborne, the observer maintains constant vigilance of ground activities and coordinating movements of the aircraft with the pilot.
- d. Tactical Flight Officer directs ground units and furnishes pertinent information to both dispatch and ground units responding to calls, observing suspicious activities, or in accomplishing any other assignment.



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- e. Maintains event logs and highlights, listing all required information pertinent to each call or incident, and assures that the log is entered into the database at the end of each shift.
- f. While airborne, the observer maintains constant vigilance of ground activities and coordinating movements of the aircraft with the pilot.

M. Pilot Assignment

1. All personnel serving as “pilot in command” for the APD ASU must hold licenses and certificates as required by the FAA FAR’s Part 61 for the type of aircraft flown. In addition to the appropriate medical certificate the following are the APD ASU’s minimum requirements to act as “pilot in command” for the department aircraft.
2. Fixed Wing Aircraft (AIR 5 C-182R)
 - a. Pilot must hold a minimum rating of Private Pilot for “Airplane Single Engine Land” and may operate department aircraft under this rating pursuant to FAR Part 61.113 (b)(1)(2), in addition to:
 - b. Pilot must be “High Performance Endorsed”.
 - c. Pilot must have a minimum of 100 hours flight experience logged in “High Performance Aircraft” (Any logged flight experience prior to pilot achieving Private Pilot rating will not be counted).
 - d. Pilot must conduct a flight with the unit supervisor and/or unit senior fixed wing pilot to demonstrate ability to safely and proficiency operate that aircraft prior to being approved to operate as “PIC”.
 - e. Pilot must have a minimum of 5 hours logged in APD Fixed Wing (in addition to paragraphs a, b, c and d).
 - f. To operate APD fixed wing for night operations, pilot must have a minimum of 20 hours logged night flight experience in APD’s Fixed Wing Aircraft (pilot may only fly night missions without the required 20-hour minimum if an APD pilot approved to be night “PIC” accompanies in flight, stationed at the dual controls).
 - g. All APD Fixed Wing Pilots shall attend / complete annual “recurrence training”.
 - h. It is the continued goal of APD to encourage all sworn Fixed Wing Pilots continue to train and work toward achieving a commercial pilots rating to add to professionalism and experience.
 - i. Any contractual pilot working for the APD ASU must hold a minimum rating of Commercial Pilot for “Airplane Single Engine Land” pursuant to FAR Part 61.133 (a) to operate department aircraft.



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3. Rotor Craft - Helicopter (AIR 1 EC 120B)

- a. Pilot must hold a minimum rating of Private Pilot for "Rotorcraft-Helicopter" and may operate department aircraft under this rating pursuant to FAR Part 61.113 (b)(1)(2) in addition to:
- b. Pilot must have a minimum of 200 hours of logged flight experience in a "turbine helicopter" (any logged time prior to achieving private pilot rating will not be counted).
- c. Pilot must have a minimum of 100 hours of logged flight experience at night in a "turbine helicopter" (any logged time prior to achieving private pilot rating will not be counted).
- d. Pilot must have attended and successfully completed American Eurocopter's EC 120B Transition School and received a certificate as "Type Rating" for the EC20B "Colibri" Helicopter (this may not be substituted).
- e. Pilot must conduct a flight with the unit supervisor and/or unit senior rotorcraft - helicopter pilot to demonstrate ability to safely and proficiency operate that aircraft prior to being approved to operate as "PIC".
- f. Pilot must have a minimum of 5 hours logged in the APD Helicopter (in addition to paragraphs a, b, c, d and e).
- g. All APD Rotorcraft Pilots shall attend / complete Bi- annual "recurrence training".
- h. All APD pilots should attend and become trained in flying helicopter with Night Vision Goggles for added safety and mission readiness.
- i. It is the continued goal of APD to encourage all sworn rotorcraft – helicopter pilots to work toward and train to achieve a commercial pilot rating to add to professionalism and experience.
- j. Any contractual pilot working for the APD ASU must hold a minimum rating of Commercial Pilot for "Rotorcraft - Helicopter" pursuant to FAR Part 61.133 (a) to operate department aircraft.

N. APD Night Vision Goggle Operation and Pilot Use

1. APD will strive to follow the FAA recommended policies of Night Vision Goggle (NVG) use in an aircraft cockpit that is "Non-NVG Compliant" or "Non-NVG compatible."
2. No ASU sworn or contractual pilot shall be allowed to intentionally operate/fly a department aircraft utilizing NVG's under the following:
 - a. The aircraft's cockpit instrumentation is not FAA certified as being "NVG Compliant".
 - b. If the pilot is not trained or certified to fly an aircraft utilizing NVG (must be an approved NVG certification program).
 - c. Pilots not NVG trained, or pilots in an aircraft not certified for NVG operations shall not conduct any flights that would require the use of NVG to safely complete the mission (such as flights at night over areas with poor unlit visual reference like the West Mesa, Rio Puerco, Sandia Foothills etc.).



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3. Exceptions to the Above

- a. Any APD ASU pilot sworn or contractual may have NVGs attached to their helmet with a live battery pack in the stowed position for emergency only regardless of pilot NVG training or aircraft being NVG Compliant. This is due to the large unlit area of open mesa between AEG (Double Eagle II) airport and the city, any area in which flight is unavoidable for operations.
- b. If a pilot should have an emergency in an area as listed in paragraph (d) (such as the need to conduct an autorotation or make an off-site precautionary landing) he/she may utilize NVG at his/her discretion to safely land the aircraft.
- c. Any APD ASU pilot sworn or contractual pilot that is NVG certified (by approved course) may operate/fly under NVG at their discretion as needed in any FAA approved "NVG Compliant" aircraft.
- d. APD ASU Helicopter Air 1, registration number N120PD, serial number 1239 is FAA certified as an "NVG Compliant Aircraft"

O. APD Response to Calls for Service at Double Eagle II Airport

1. Double Eagle II Airport is a general aviation airport governed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The airport has strictly enforced access policies for all vehicular and pedestrian traffic in and around aircraft movement area. These areas include the runways, taxiways and the ramp area. Vehicle, pedestrian and aircraft movement in these areas can only be accomplished with approval and direction from the Tower/Ground controllers. The reason for this is to prevent incursions between airplanes and ground vehicles or persons.
2. When responding to incidents requiring entry to these controlled areas (aircraft crashes, worksite injury incidents, ramp checks for missing aircraft, suspicious situations involving pilots/passengers etc.) officers must contact the Double Eagle Tower/Ground Control prior to entering the access gates onto the ramp areas.
3. For the purpose of this section Aircraft/Airport Movement Area refers to any area where aircraft movement is possible or probable. This is to include all ramp area, taxiways and runways.
4. When responding to incidents and calls for service at Double Eagle II Airport, personnel will not enter any aircraft movement area without prior approval from the control tower. All direction from the control tower and/or airport personnel will be followed as instructed with no deviation. Even though there is an incident at the airport, ground and flight operations may continue.
5. When in an airport movement area extreme care and caution should be used at all times for inherent dangers. Aircraft have the right of way at all times unless otherwise directed by the tower. Airport properties are marked with both ground signage and painted markings that are not easily understood if not trained.



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Tower personnel will be able to instruct/direct emergency personnel on a safe approach either in a vehicle or on foot. Caution should be used when working around or near aircraft for moving parts and non-visible hazards such as propeller and jet blast. This is the high speed air caused by aircraft engines.

6. Communications will contact The Albuquerque Police Department's Air Support Unit Personnel immediately and advise of any incidents at Double Eagle II Airport. In many cases Air Support Unit personnel may be able to handle the incident without assistance from Field Services Bureau. Communications will attempt to contact the Air Support Unit either via radio or telephone.

7. Prior to Arrival Dispatched Units Shall:

Attempt contact with The Albuquerque Police Department Air Support Unit Via the following (and in listed order):

- a. Hanger: 505-833-6983
- b. On Dispatch Frequencies
- c. Contact ASU Sergeant (After hours or no response at hanger or via radio)
- d. Contact On-Call Personnel (After hours or no response at hanger or via radio) Communications has ASU on-call roster.

8. Upon Arrival Dispatched Units Shall:

- a. Once entering an aircraft movement area engage emergency lights.
- b. If available, follow Airport Personnel or Air Support Unit Member as directed.
- c. Proceed with caution as directed by tower or airport personnel.
- d. Remain in contact with tower and airport personnel via:
 - (i) Telephone
 - (ii) Through APD Communications to control tower.
 - (iii) IComm Radio (Available from Air Support Unit Member - Frequency 120.15)
 - (iv) Albuquerque Fire Department "Alarm" channel (Located in FIRECITY bank of APD unit radios).
- e. Do not make any unauthorized movements without prior approval.
- f. Follow Department SOP on handling Aircraft Incidents

9. Post incident dispatched units shall advise tower personnel when all units are clear from aircraft movement areas.