

**As Introduced**

**134th General Assembly  
Regular Session  
2021-2022**

**H. B. No. 486**

**Representative Holmes**

**Cosponsors: Representatives Ferguson, Riedel, Seitz**

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**A BILL**

To enact sections 4561.60, 4561.61, 4561.62, 1  
4561.63, 4561.64, and 4561.65 of the Revised 2  
Code to establish requirements related to the 3  
use of an unmanned aerial vehicle for 4  
surveillance. 5

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1.** That sections 4561.60, 4561.61, 4561.62, 6  
4561.63, 4561.64, and 4561.65 of the Revised Code be enacted to 7  
read as follows: 8

Sec. 4561.60. As used in sections 4561.60 to 4561.65 of 9  
the Revised Code: 10

(A) "Flight data" means the data collected by an unmanned 11  
aerial vehicle during its flight, including images, videos, or 12  
other forms of observation recording. 13

(B) "Flight logistics" means the data pertaining to an 14  
unmanned aerial vehicle's flight, including the flight's 15  
duration, path, and mission objectives. 16

(C) "Law enforcement agency" means a government entity 17

that employs peace officers to perform law enforcement duties. 18

(D) "Peace officer" has the same meaning as in section 19  
2921.51 of the Revised Code. 20

(E) "Unmanned aerial vehicle" means a powered, aerial 21  
vehicle to which all of the following apply: 22

(1) The vehicle does not carry a human operator and is 23  
operated without the possibility of direct human intervention 24  
from within or on the vehicle. 25

(2) The vehicle uses aerodynamic forces to provide lift. 26

(3) The vehicle can fly autonomously or be piloted 27  
remotely. 28

(4) The vehicle is either expendable or recoverable. 29

"Unmanned aerial vehicle" is commonly referred to as a 30  
drone and does not include a satellite. 31

(F) "Unmanned aerial vehicle system" means an unmanned 32  
aerial vehicle and associated elements, including communication 33  
links and components that control the unmanned aerial vehicle 34  
and that are required for the remote pilot in command to operate 35  
the vehicle in the air space over this state. 36

**Sec. 4561.61.** (A) Flight data and any information obtained 37  
through that data is not admissible in a criminal proceeding 38  
unless the data and the information was obtained as follows: 39

(1) Pursuant to the authority granted under a properly 40  
issued search warrant; 41

(2) Under exigent circumstances that constitute an 42  
exception to the general search warrant requirement. 43

(B) Flight data and any information obtained through that 44

data may not be used in an affidavit to obtain a search warrant 45  
unless one of the following apply: 46

(1) The data or information was obtained under a 47  
previously issued search warrant or the use of the unmanned 48  
aerial vehicle that obtained the data or information operated 49  
under exigent circumstances as specified under division (A) (2) 50  
of this section. 51

(2) The data or information was obtained during the 52  
monitoring of public lands or international borders. 53

**Sec. 4561.62.** (A) A judge or magistrate that receives an 54  
affidavit for a search warrant from a law enforcement agency for 55  
the use of an unmanned aerial vehicle shall comply with the 56  
requirements of the United States Constitution, the Ohio 57  
Constitution, the Revised Code, including Chapter 2933. of the 58  
Revised Code, and any other applicable law. Additionally, the 59  
court shall require the affidavit for the search warrant to 60  
include the following information: 61

(1) The individuals who will have the power to authorize 62  
the use of the unmanned aerial vehicle system; 63

(2) The locations where the unmanned aerial vehicle system 64  
will operate; 65

(3) The maximum period that the unmanned aerial vehicle 66  
system will operate for each flight; 67

(4) Whether the unmanned aerial vehicle system will 68  
collect flight data and related information about individuals or 69  
groups of individuals. 70

(B) If an affidavit for a search warrant indicates that an 71  
unmanned aerial vehicle system will collect information 72

specified in division (A)(4) of this section, the judge or 73  
magistrate shall require the law enforcement agency to include 74  
all of the following additional information in the application 75  
for the search warrant: 76

(1) The circumstances when the unmanned aerial vehicle 77  
system will be used; 78

(2) The specific types of flight data and information the 79  
agency intends to collect about the individual or individuals 80  
who are the subject of the search to be conducted by the 81  
unmanned aerial vehicle system; 82

(3) How the data and information collected and any related 83  
conclusions drawn from that data and information will be used, 84  
disclosed, or otherwise handled; 85

(4) The period of time for which the data and information 86  
will be retained; 87

(5) Whether the data and information will be destroyed, 88  
and if so, when and how the information will be destroyed. 89

**Sec. 4561.63.** A law enforcement agency may use an unmanned 90  
aerial vehicle for surveillance without a search warrant as 91  
follows: 92

(A) To patrol within twenty-five miles of a national 93  
border for purposes of policing that border to prevent or deter 94  
the illegal entry of any individual, illegal substance, or 95  
contraband; 96

(B) When exigent circumstances exist and the agency 97  
reasonably suspects that absent swift, preventative action, 98  
there is an imminent danger to the life of an individual or 99  
bodily harm to an individual; 100

(C) During or immediately after an environmental or weather-related catastrophe to allow the agency to better preserve public safety, to protect property, to survey environmental damage in order to determine if a state of emergency should be declared, or to conduct surveillance for the assessment and evaluation of damage, erosion, flood, or contamination; 101  
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(D) For research, education, training, testing, or development efforts related to unmanned aerial vehicles or unmanned aerial vehicle systems, their technologies, and their potential applications, undertaken by or in conjunction with a school, an institution of higher education, or a public or private collaborator. 108  
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**Sec. 4561.64.** (A) A law enforcement agency shall not use, authorize the use of, or issue a permit for the use of, an unmanned aerial vehicle armed with any lethal weapon. 114  
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(B) A law enforcement agency shall not authorize the use of or issue a permit for the use of an unmanned aerial vehicle for the surveillance of one private individual by another private individual unless the agency obtains one of the following: 117  
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(1) The express, informed consent of the individual being surveilled by the unmanned aerial vehicle; 122  
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(2) The express, informed consent of the owner of the real property on which the individual being surveilled by the unmanned aerial vehicle is present. 124  
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(C) A law enforcement agency shall not use, authorize the use of, or issue a permit for the use of, an unmanned aerial vehicle in order to conduct surveillance of individuals who are 127  
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lawfully exercising their constitutional rights, unless that 130  
surveillance is otherwise authorized under sections 4561.60 to 131  
4561.65 of the Revised Code. 132

**Sec. 4561.65.** (A) A law enforcement agency shall do all of 133  
the following relative to its use of unmanned aerial vehicles: 134

(1) Ensure that the agency and any applicable peace 135  
officer employed by the agency documents all flight logistics 136  
for each surveillance flight of an unmanned aerial vehicle taken 137  
by or on behalf of the agency; 138

(2) Verify that the flight logistics for each surveillance 139  
flight is accurate and complete; 140

(3) Retain the flight logistics for not less than five 141  
years. 142

(B) A law enforcement agency shall retain all flight data 143  
for not more than ninety days unless one of the following 144  
applies: 145

(1) The data is relevant to an ongoing investigation or 146  
trial. 147

(2) The data is accompanied by a written statement that 148  
articulates a reasonable suspicion that the data contains 149  
evidence of a crime. 150

(C) (1) Except as provided by division (C) (2) of this 151  
section, a person accused of a crime that includes evidence 152  
gathered through the use of an unmanned aerial vehicle may 153  
obtain, via the subpoena and discovery process available during 154  
court proceedings, information relating to that person acquired 155  
in the course of surveillance of that person by the unmanned 156  
aerial vehicle. 157

(2) The operational capabilities of the unmanned aerial 158  
vehicle and unmanned aerial vehicle system or other operational 159  
information strictly related to the technical conduct and 160  
physical security of the surveillance operation is not evidence 161  
subject to subpoena or discovery under division (C)(1) of this 162  
section. 163

(D) The flight logistics required and retained in 164  
accordance with this section are a public record for purposes of 165  
section 149.43 of the Revised Code, unless the content of those 166  
flight logistics qualify for an exemption under that section. 167