

# Drone

Continued from Page 1A

type thing. It's more of an intelligence gathering thing."

According to the Electronic Freedom Foundation — a digital rights nonprofit — nearly 1,500 law enforcement agencies across the country use drones.

Police departments elsewhere have pointed to drone first responder programs as a way to cope with staffing shortages like the one LMPD is experiencing.

Advocates of police drones have also pointed to the ability to reduce potentially dangerous police interactions with the public by sending officers to a scene only when a police response is actually needed.

However, the rapidly expanding use of drones by law enforcement in recent years has drawn concern from civil liberties groups like the American Civil Liberties Union, which says there needs to be "strict limits" regarding when they are used and how data they collect is handled.

"Good policies, including on usage limits, transparency and privacy, should not be left up to police departments, but should be given legal force by a city council or other legislative body as part of a vote to approve" police use of drones as first responders, ACLU senior policy analyst Jay Stanley wrote last year.

Chief among the concerns of civil liberties advocates is the specter of law enforcement drones being used to conduct warrantless surveillance.

LMPD Chief Jacquelyn Gwinn-Villaroel said LMPD has had a drone program in operation "for a while" and that Thursday's announcement is only an expansion of the program to all divisions.

Later on Thursday, an LMPD spokesperson told The Courier Journal LMPD launched its first drone flight on Dec. 27, 2021, and has since logged 340 flights. However, many of those flights were during the same incidents or events, they said, with a new flight logged every time a new battery was changed.

Currently, LMPD has seven drones and four pilots operating across Louisville, the spokesperson said. They added that drones are currently used for "situational awareness during active incidents, traffic monitoring during spe-



Louisville Mayor Craig Greenberg announces Metro Police's expanded use of drones at a news conference at the Louisville Metro Southwest Government Center on May 16. JOSH WOOD/COURIER JOURNAL



A Corpus Christi Police drone is prepped for a demonstration at Del Mar College Windward Campus on May 15 in Texas. ANGELA PIAZZA/CALLER-TIMES

cial events, photos of large crime scenes [and] accident reconstruction."

In 2020, LMPD told Louisville Public Media the agency partnered with Kentucky State Police to monitor protests that year with drones because LMPD did not have drones of its own.

LMPD's drone policy, contained within the agency's 922-page-long Standard Operating Procedures, was originally created in November 2021.

The policy says drone use is authorized in a number of situations, including documenting crime scenes, search-and-rescue operations, special event overwatch, barricaded subjects and "any other incidents approved by the Chief of Police, or his/her designee."

According to the policy, drones "will not be used for the purpose of investigative surveillance" and pilots "will make every effort not to record locations and

persons that are not the subject of the mission. This is an effort to protect the individual privacy of members of the public who are not involved in the incident."

Chula Vista, California's police department pioneered the use of drones as first responders. That department publicly releases maps of drone flight paths online along with information such as the address to which they were dispatched, the reasons they were sent and the case number.

Checking that police department's drone-tracking website on Thursday morning, The Courier Journal was able to see numerous drone flights from the previous afternoon, including flights responding to calls about mental health crises, a person with a weapon and a traffic accident.

Asked if Louisville will commit to releasing that same data, Gwinn-Villaroel said LMPD will publicly release that information, but will "develop our own timeline" to release it.

Greenberg said the drone pilot program will cost \$100,000 for training in addition to the cost of the drones.

Reach reporter Josh Wood at [jwood@courier-journal.com](mailto:jwood@courier-journal.com) or on X, formerly known as Twitter, at @JWood-Journo

## A Help Button Should Go Where You Go!

*To be truly independent, your personal emergency device needs to work on the go.*

MobileHelp® allows you to summon emergency help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by simply pressing your personal help button. Unlike traditional systems that only work inside your home, a MobileHelp medical alert system extends help beyond the home. Now you can participate in all your favorite activities such as gardening, taking walks, shopping and traveling all with the peace of mind of having a personal alert system with you. MobileHelp, the "on-the-go" help button, is powered by one of the nation's largest cellular networks, so there's virtually no limit to your help button's range.

**No landline? No problem!** While traditional alert systems require a landline, with the MobileHelp system, a landline is not necessary. Whether you are home or away from home, a simple press of your help button activates your system, providing the central station with your information and location. Our trained emergency operators will know who you are and where you are located.

If you're one of the millions of people that have waited for an alert service because it didn't fit your lifestyle, or settled for a traditional system even though it only worked in the home, then we welcome you to try MobileHelp. Experience peace of mind in the home or on the go.

**GET OUR SPECIAL OFFER NOW:**

- ✓ **FREE EXPEDITED SHIPPING\***
- ✓ **FREE ONE MONTH SERVICE\***
- ✓ **50% OFF AUTO FALL DETECT\***
- ✓ **plus FREE EQUIPMENT TO USE!\***

Unlike "stay-at-home" emergency systems MobileHelp protects you:		
Places where your Help Button will work	MobileHelp	Traditional Help Buttons
At Home	✓	✓
On a Walk	✓	✗
On Vacation	✓	✗
At the Park	✓	✗
Shopping	✓	✗

Optional Fall Button™

**OUR BEST OFFER EVER!**

From **\$19.95\*** /month

The automatic fall detect pendant that works **WHERE YOU GO!**

**MobileHelp Features:**

- Simple one-button operation
- 24/7 access to U.S. based emergency operators
- Affordable service
- GPS location detection
- Amplified 2-way voice communication
- Available Nationwide

**502-388-4082**

<https://offers.mobilehelp.com/usatodaye-edition/>

\*For a limited time - promotions available for select systems and subscription plans, please call for specific details. Offers are valid for new customers and for the first year of service and cannot be combined with any other offers. \$19.95 is the monthly subscription price for a MobileHelp Classic (at home only) system. There is a one-time \$49.95 processing fee to subscribe to this plan. Equipment shown is the MobileHelp DUO (at home and on the go) system available at a higher monthly cost. Most equipment is included at no cost while actively subscribing and must be returned upon cancellation. Free one month of service offer valid with purchase of Annual plan and includes month 13 at no additional charge. Refer to terms and conditions for specific details. Depending on the promotion chosen, you may receive an additional savings of \$5.50 off the \$11 retail price of Fall Detect service. After first year, Fall Detect pricing reverts to discounted price of \$8.25/month when combined with MobileHelp Connect Premium. Fall Detection does not detect 100% of falls. If able, users should push their help button when they need assistance. Fall detection is not intended to replace a caregiver. MobileHelp is a registered trademark, patented technology. Current GPS location may not always be available in every situation on the cellular network at all times. Expedited shipping offer is for Annual plans made prior to 3 PM EST Mon-Fri. Expedited shipping is standard 2-day -- no deliveries on Saturdays/Sundays or to Hawaii or Alaska. Shipping delays may occur due to situations beyond our control. MFPH-01045 Rev. 1

# Nothing ever changes. Until you change it.

Access our easy-to-use election guides to help you vote for the progress you want to see.

Vote informed at [courier-journal.com/elections/voter-guide](http://courier-journal.com/elections/voter-guide)

**courier journal**