

CPD Launches Drones as First Responders Program

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The Cincinnati Police Department has officially launched its newest public safety initiative—**Drones as First Responders (DFR)**—a technology-driven program designed to enhance emergency response, improve officer safety, and provide real-time aerial visibility during critical incidents.



Powered by **Axon and Skydio**, the DFR program deploys autonomous drones in response to 911 calls, giving officers an overhead view of the scene before they arrive. This added perspective helps officers assess situations more accurately, respond more effectively, and make informed decisions in real time.

Using the same real-time operations platform that powers CPD's Connect Cincinnati camera network, the drones are fully integrated with **Axon Fusus** for live monitoring, **Axon Evidence** for secure video storage, and **Dedrone by Axon** for airspace awareness.

Instead of waiting for an officer to arrive on foot or by vehicle, these drones can be launched within seconds of dispatch. In many cases, this allows for early identification of risks, faster response times, and more efficient resource deployment.

“Within seconds of a call, a drone can be overhead showing us exactly what’s happening,” said Police Chief Teresa Theetge. “This technology is a force multiplier for our department and enhances the safety of both our officers and the public.”

The DFR program will cover approximately 40% of the city including Price Hill, OTR, Queensgate, West End, Downtown, CUF, Northside, and Spring Grove Village with plans to continue to expand coverage with a goal of covering 90% of the city by the end of 2025. Drones will be used only in response to dispatched calls for service—not for random surveillance or general patrol—and their cameras remain pointed at the horizon during flight to protect privacy.

All DFR operators are FAA-certified and trained in public safety drone use. Strict protocols are in place to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal laws, and all operations are logged and reviewed for transparency.

This program represents a major step forward in the department's commitment to using innovation to keep Cincinnati safe. By leveraging drones, CPD can respond faster, see more clearly, and make better-informed decisions in the moments that matter most.

Cincinnati Police Department Drones as First Responders Transparency Portal

Click on the link below to view the flight patterns of CPD Drones as First Responders:

<https://cloud.skydio.com/dashboard/cincinnati/policedrones>