PROCEDURE (600.00)

Directive Specific Definitions:

- Chief Pilot: The lead pilot for the Air Support Unit (ASU) and shall be a sworn Portland Police Bureau member and pilot.
- Pilots: Members with a private pilot’s license and are designated as Bureau Pilots for the Air Support Unit.
- Observers: Members designated as Tactical Flight Observers (TFO) for the Air Support Unit. Observers are onboard all aircraft to assist the Pilot.
- Aircraft call numbers: The ASU’s radio call numbers (Air 1 or Air 2) when communicating with ground units.
- The ASU is under the command of the Tactical Operations Division (TOD). Operationally, the Chief Pilot supervises the Air Support Unit.
- Members of the ASU serve on a detached basis from their primary assignments. RU managers will make every effort to release pilots and observers for Bureau flight duty when requested.
- The Chief Pilot is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the Air Support Unit. All Bureau use of aircraft, other than out of town travel, must be coordinated through the Chief Pilot. Pilots are responsible for the safe operation of the aircraft and have the authority to refuse any flight due to a safety concern. Bureau pilots will conduct all Bureau flights. A TFO will be onboard all flights, except transport flights, unless approved by the Chief Pilot. The TFO will coordinate operations on the ground. The TFO may communicate with marked patrol cars using the shop number as the unit number. Ground units will use Air 1 or Air 2 when communicating with the TFO.

Member Responsibilities (600.00)

a. The ASU is available for flight operations 24 hours a day. In order to achieve maximum effectiveness and use of the Air Support Unit, all members are encouraged to think aircraft. Significant savings in staff hours and related costs can be achieved when aircraft assist with patrol functions. Possible applications include vehicle and foot pursuits, perimeter positions, surveillance, and command overview of critical incidents and area checks.
b. If the ASU is not airborne, a sergeant or above may request assistance by contacting the Dispatch Coordinator. Members requesting activation will need to provide a call back telephone number in the event additional details are required. Requests for Air Support may be made by contacting TOD. Response time for deployment is approximately one hour.

c. Air 1 logs into the CAD system at the beginning of each flight mission. The CAD system will denote if Air 1 is airborne. Members may contact BOEC for the ASU operational radio net.

d. A request for emergency photographs may require a call out. If photographs are not needed immediately, contact TOD with the request.

Air Support Unit Responsibilities (600.00)

a. Each member of the ASU will be familiar with the Air Support Unit SOP (including any revisions). It is the responsibility of the Chief Pilot to maintain the SOP manual and ensure members of the unit are familiar with it.

b. Unit members paged with a flight request will respond within 10 minutes as to availability.

c. A list of locations to be photographed will be maintained in the Bureau hangar. TFOs will review this list prior to each flight and photograph the locations if possible.

d. Unit members will scan the precinct operation radio nets while airborne and assist in patrol calls when possible.

e. Flight requests made of an ASU member will be fulfilled unless there is a safety concern.

f. ASU members will write a report when requested or when required by policy. A copy of all reports will be forwarded to the Chief Pilot, in addition to the end of flight reports completed by the pilot and TFO.

g. TOD will coordinate requests for ride-alongs during business hours. All ride-alongs are subject to the approval of the Chief Pilot. Bureau members are encouraged to participate in ride-alongs.

Deployment (600.00)
Aircraft may be deployed to provide patrol support, surveillance, enforcement and training. Life saving missions will receive priority. Additional services may include:

a. Specific enforcement of violations.

b. Surveillance of identified problem locations or people.

c. Aerial supervisory platform at disaster scenes.

d. Bureau member.

e. Aerial photography.

f. Major incident support.

g. Narcotic interdiction.

h. Special events such as Rose Festival or Portland Marathon.

i. Assume primary unit status and responsibility in a police vehicle pursuit. The TFO will write a report and deliver a copy to the primary ground unit.

j. Maintain perimeter when a suspect is hiding in a block.

k. Survey an area of interest.

l. Advise ground units for deployment on congested streets and freeways or when requested.

m. Provide visual assistance to fire, rescue and ambulance personnel.

n. Crowd control, protest marches and demonstrations.
During Disasters or Emergencies (600.00)

In most situations, the Air Support Unit will be under the command of the Emergency Operations Center. Anticipated responsibilities include:

a. Complete a damage assessment of the area affected by the disaster or emergency.
b. Coordinate efforts with ground units and other aircraft.
c. Assist as an airborne relay point for communications if there is a failure at BOEC.
d. Establish a common VHF radio frequency with other involved aircraft.
e. Act as a liaison with the Federal Aviation Administration regarding air space requirements.

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