STATE FISCAL YEAR 2023 ILLINOIS FREEDOM FROM DRONE SURVEILLANCE ACT REPORT

ICJIA

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

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FREEDOM FROM DRONE SURVEILLANCE ACT REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Drone technology has become increasingly accessible in recent years, providing new tactical advantages to police departments. In a 2020 survey conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) 34% of police departments (n=860) said they were interested in purchasing a drone for their departments. Nearly half of the departments (47%) reported already using drones (Police Executive Research Forum, 2020). Police can use drones to get aerial views of crowds, traffic accidents, and crime scenes (Engberts & Gillissen, 2016).

Drone technology is becoming increasingly popular among law enforcement agencies. However, the public has mixed feelings about the use of drones for policing. A 2019 study indicated public support for drone use in response to serious criminal offenses, such as vehicular hijackings and reckless driving (Rosenfeld, 2019). However, findings from the study also revealed concerns that drone use can infringe on people's rights by allowing the government to covertly monitor, scrutinize, and record citizens (Bentley, 2018). To partly address concerns over privacy approximately one-third of states require police to obtain a warrant before using drones for surveillance purposes (Bentley, 2018).

Some law enforcement agencies see drones as beneficial for:

- search and rescue
- photography and reconstruction of crime scenes
- investigation of armed/dangerous suspects
- support for disaster responses
- reconstruction of traffic accidents (Police Executive Research Forum, 2020)

In addition, drones can offer a tactical advantage in dangerous situations (McNeal et al. 2017).

Research is limited on the nature and extent of drone use among law enforcement. A 2017 study estimated that at least 347 police and other first responder agencies in the United States had acquired drones (Gettinger, 2017). In the 2020 PERF survey, nearly 90% of agencies that reported using drones noted having departmental drone use policies in place (Police Executive Research Forum, 2020).
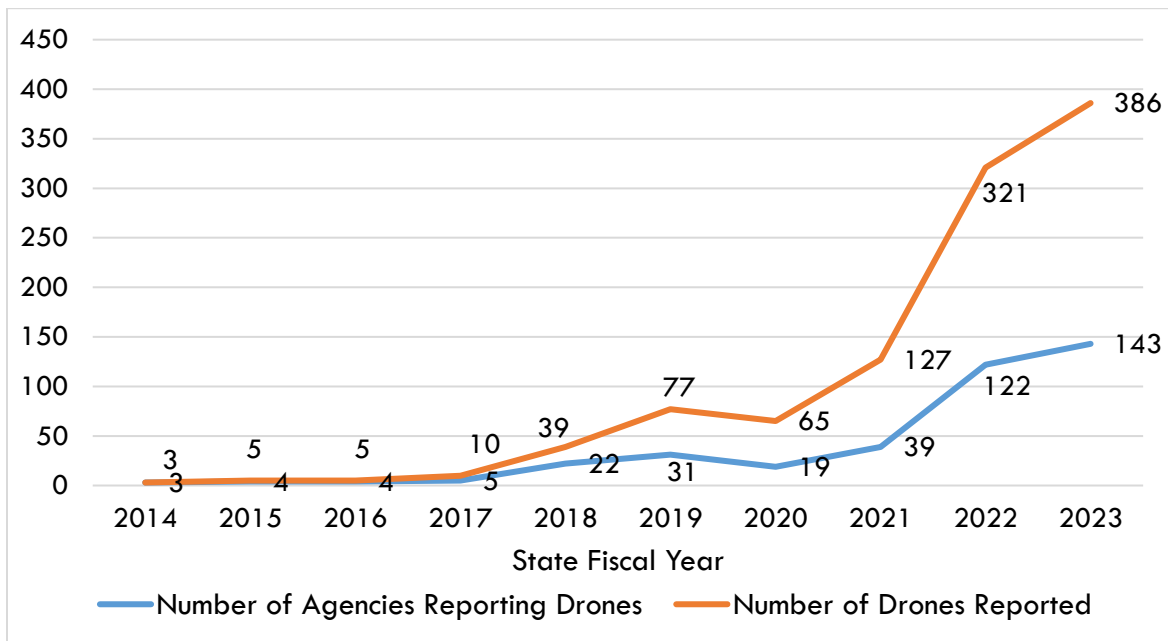
ILLINOIS LAW ENFORCEMENT DRONE REPORTING

In accord with the Freedom from Drone Surveillance Act [725 ILCS 167], the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) is legislatively mandated to publish an annual report listing law enforcement agencies in Illinois that own a drone and the number of drones owned. A "law enforcement agency" is defined as "any agency or political subdivision of the state vested by law with the duty to maintain public order and enforce criminal laws." A "drone" is defined as "any aerial vehicle that does not carry a human operator."

ICJIA created a Freedom From Drone Surveillance Act Law Enforcement Reporting Form using Qualtrics survey software.[1] The Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System provided email addresses for 1,648 police chiefs and other contacts. An email was sent to 983 law enforcement agencies in March 2023 to request law enforcement agencies to report on drone ownership. If an email address was not active or valid, a manual online search was conducted to find the correct address. Reminder emails were sent in April, May, and June 2023. By June 25, 2023, 402 agencies, or 41% of those contacted, had completed the form.

In state fiscal year (SFY) 2023, a tally of the completed reporting forms showed that 143 law enforcement agencies reported owning 386 drones. By comparison, in SFY14, the first year of reporting to ICJIA, three agencies reported drone ownership. Notable increases in drones started in SFY17 (Figure 1). However, ICJIA's heightened outreach efforts to collect information, rather than increased drone ownership, may have accounted for some of the reported increase.

Figure 1

Number of Agencies Owning Drones and Number of Drones, State Fiscal Years 2014-2023

Note. Illinois law enforcement agency reports to ICJIA.

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[1] View all ICJIA drone reports here.

In SFY23, 36% of responding agencies (n=143) reported owning 386 drones.

Table 1

Number of Drones Reported by Agency Type, SFY23

Agency	Total
Municipal Police	283
Sheriff's Office	86
Major Crash Assistance Team	8
Forest Preserve	2
Conservation District/Park District	2
Emergency Response Teams	4
College Police Department	1

In SFY23, 402 agencies responded to ICJIA's drone report request (Table 2).

Table 2

Drone Totals by Responding Agency

Agency	Number of Drones
Albers Police Department	0
Alexander County Sheriff's Office	0
Alexis Police Department	0
Algonquin Police Department	1
Annawan Police Dept	0
Antioch Police Department	2
Arlington Heights Police Department	2
Arthur Police Department	0
Assumption Police Department	0
Auburn Police Department	0
Aurora Police Department	2
Aurora University Campus Public Safety	0
Avon Police Department	0
Barrington Hills Police Department	0
Barrington Police Department	0
Bartlett Police Department	2
Bartonville Police Department	0
Batavia Police Department	1
Beardstown Police Department	1
Bedford Park Police Department	0
Beecher Police Department	0
Belvidere Police Department	0

Bethalto Police Department	0
Bloomingdale Police Department	2
Blue Island Police Department	1
Blue Mound Police Department	0
Bluffs Police Department	0
Bolingbrook Police Department	9
Bourbonnais Police Department	0
Bradley Police Department	1
Bradley University Police Department	0
Breese Police Department	0
Brookfield Police Department	2
Brookfield Zoo Police Department	0
Brooklyn Police Department	0
Bull Valley Police Department	0
Burbank Police Department	0
Bureau County Sheriff's Office	0
Calumet City Police Department	0
Campton Hills Police Department	1
Carbondale Police Department	2
Carmi Police Department	0
Carpentersville Police Department	1
Carthage Police Department	0
Cary Police Department	1
Catlin Police Department	0
Central Illinois Emergency Response Team	1
Centralia Police Department	0
Champaign County Sheriff's Office	0
Champaign Police Department	0
Channahon Police Department	3
Charleston Police Department	0
Chester Police Department	2
Chicago Police Department	12
Cicero Police Department	0
Clarendon Hills Police Department	1
Clark County Sheriff's Office	1
Coal Valley Police Department	0
Coffeen Police Department	0
Coles County Sheriff's Office	0
College of DuPage Police Department	0
College of Lake County Police Department	0
Cook County Sheriff's Office	10
Cortland Police Department	0
Countryside Police Department	0

Creal Springs Police Department	0
Crestwood Police Department	0
Creve Coeur Police Department	0
Crystal Lake Police Department	0
Cumberland County Sheriff's Office	0
Dana Police Department	0
Danville Police Department	0
Darien Police Department	0
Decatur Police Department	3
Deer Creek Police Department	0
DeKalb County Sheriff's Office	2
Delavan Police Department	0
DePue Police Department	0
Downers Grove Police Department	3
Du Quoin Police Department	0
DuPage County Forest Preserve Police	2
DuPage County Sheriff's Office	1
DuPage Metropolitan Emergency Response Team (M.E.R.I.T.)	3
Earlville Police Department	0
East Moline Police Department	0
East Peoria Police Department	2
Edwardsville Police Department	0
Effingham County Sheriff's Office	0
Effingham Police Department	2
Elburn Police Department	1
Elgin Community College Police Department	0
Elgin Police Department	14
Elliott Police Department	0
Elmhurst Police Department	2
Elmwood Police Department	0
Elmwood Park Police Department	0
Elwood Police Department	0
Erie Police Department	1
Essex Police Department	0
Eureka College Police Department	0
Eureka Police Department	0
Evergreen Park Police Department	0
Fairfield Police Department	0
Fairmont City Police Department	0
Fairview Police Department	0
Farina Police Department	0
Findlay Police Department	0
Fisher Police Department	0

Flora Police Department	0
Flossmoor Police Department	0
Forest City Police Department	0
Forest Preserve District of Kane County Police Department	0
Forest Preserve District of Will County Police Dept.	0
Forest Preserves of Cook County Police Department	0
Fox Lake Police Department	1
Fox River Grove Police Department	0
Fox Valley Park District Police Department	0
Frankfort Police Department	0
Franklin County Sheriff's Office	0
Freeburg Police Department	0
Galesburg Police Department	0
Galva Police Department	0
Geneseo Police Department	0
Germantown Police Department	0
Gibson City Police Department	0
Gilberts Police Department	0
Girard Police Department	0
Glasford Police Department	0
Glen Carbon Police Department	2
Glen Ellyn Police Department	1
Glencoe Public Safety Department	2
Glendale Heights Police Department	1
Glenwood Police Department	0
Grafton Police Department	0
Granite City Police Department	1
Granville Police Department	0
Greene County Sheriff's Office	0
Greenville Police Department	0
Gurnee Police Department	1
Hamilton County Sheriff's Office	0
Hampton Police Department	0
Hanover Park Police Department	1
Harrisburg Police Department	0
Hartford Police Department	0
Harvard Police Department	0
Harwood Heights Police Department	0
Havana Police Department	0
Henderson County Sheriff's Office	0
Henry Police Department	0
Herrin Police Department	0
Highland Park Police Department	3

Highland Police Department	2
Hinsdale Police Department	1
Hoffman Estates Police Department	0
Homer Police Department	0
Hometown Police Department	0
Homewood Police Department	0
Illinois State Police	47
Illinois State University Police	0
Ina Police Department	0
Indian Head Park Police Department	0
Inverness Police Department	0
Itasca Police Department	0
Jackson County Sheriff's Office	2
Jacksonville Police Department	2
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office	0
Jerseyville Police Department	0
John A. Logan College Police Department	0
John Wood Community College Police Department	0
Johnsburg Police Department	0
Johnson County Sheriff's Office	0
Joliet Police Department	8
Kane County Sheriff's Office	8
Kankakee County Sheriff's Office	4
Kendall County Sheriff's Office	2
Kingston police Department	0
Knox County Sheriff's Office	0
Knoxville Police Department	0
La Grange Park Police Department	0
La Grange Police Department	0
Lake Bluff Police Department	0
Lake County Major Crash Assistance Team	8
Lake County Sheriff's Office	15
Lake Forest Police Department	3
Lake Land College Police	0
Lake Villa Police Department	1
Lake Zurich Police Department	0
Lanark Police Department	0
Lansing Police Department	0
LaSalle County Sheriff's Office	1
LaSalle Police Department	0
Lebanon Police Department	0
Leland Police Department	0
Lemont Police Department	0

Lena Police Department	0
LeRoy Police Department	0
Lexington Police Department	0
Libertyville Police Department	1
Lincoln Land Community College Police Department	0
Lincoln Police Department	2
Lincolnwood Police Department	0
Lindenhurst Police Department	0
Lisle Police Department	0
Livingston County Sheriff's Office	1
Lockport Police Department	0
Logan County Sheriff's Office	2
Loyola Campus Safety	0
Lynwood Police Department	0
Madison County Sheriff's Office	3
Manteno Police Department	1
Marengo Police Department	0
Marine Police Department	0
Marion County Sheriff's Office	1
Marquette Heights Police Department	0
Marshall County Sheriff's Office	0
Marshall Police Department	0
Maryville Police Department	0
Mason County Sheriff's Office	0
Massac County Sheriff's Office	1
Matteson Police Department	2
Mattoon Police Department	1
McHenry County College Police Department	0
McHenry County Conservation District Police Department	1
McHenry County Sheriff's Office	2
McHenry Police Department	1
McLean County Sheriff's Office	2
McLeansboro Police Department	0
Melrose Park Police Department	2
Menard County Sheriff's Office	0
Mercer County Sheriff's Office	0
Metropolis Police Department	0
Milan Police Department	0
Milledgeville Police Department	0
Millikin University Police Department	0
Mokena Police Department	3
Moline Police Department	2
Montgomery County Sheriff's Office	0

Montgomery Police Department	1
Morris Police Department	2
Morrisonville Police Department	0
Morton Grove Police Department	3
Moultrie County Sheriff's Office	0
Mount Carmel Police Department	1
Mount Prospect Police Department	2
Mt. Olive Police Department	0
Mt. Vernon Police Department	2
Mt. Zion Police Department	0
Mundelein Police Department	0
Murphysboro Police Department	1
Naperville Park District Police Department	0
Naperville Police Department	5
New Lenox Police Department	0
Newman Police Department	0
Niles Police Department	2
Normal Police Department	1
Norridge Police Department	0
North Aurora Police Department	4
North Riverside Police Department	1
Northbrook Police Department	3
Northern Illinois University Department of Police and Public Safety	0
Northfield Police Department	0
Northlake Police Department	1
Northwestern University Police Department	0
Oak Brook Police Department	2
Oak Forest Police Department	1
Oakbrook Terrace Police Department	1
O'Fallon Police Department	0
Ogle County Sheriff's Office	2
Olney Police Department	0
Oquawka Police Department	0
Orland Park Police Department	4
Oswego Police Department	2
Ottawa Police Department	0
Palatine Police Department	2
Palos Heights Police Department	2
Palos Hills Police Department	0
Paris Police Department	0
Park Forest Police Department	1
Parkland College Police Department	0

Pearl City Police Department	0
Pekin Park District Police Department	0
Pekin Police Department	0
Peoria County Sheriff's Office	2
Peoria Heights Police Department	1
Peoria Park District Police Department	1
Perry County Sheriff's Office	0
Peru Police Department	0
Petersburg Police Department	0
Pike County Sheriff's Office	0
Pinckneyville Police Department	0
Pingree Grove Police Department	0
Plainfield Police Department	5
Plano Police Department	1
Pleasant Plains Police Department	0
Pontiac Police Department	1
Pontoon Beach Police Department	0
Prairie du Rocher Police Department	0
Princeton Police Department	1
Prophetstown Police Department	0
Prospect Heights Police Department	0
Pulaski County Sheriff's Office	1
Quincy Police Department	4
Rend Lake College Police Department	0
Richland Community College Department of Public Safety	0
Richland County Sheriff's Office	0
Richmond Police Department	0
River Forest Police Department	1
River Grove Police Department	0
Riverton Police Department	0
Riverwoods Police Department	0
Robinson Police Department	2
Rochester Police Department	0
Rock Falls Police Department	0
Rock Island County Sheriff's Office	2
Rock Island Police Department	0
Rock Valley Collège Police Department	0
Rockdale Police Department	0
Rockford Police Department	6
Roscoe Police Department	1
Roselle Police Department	2
Round Lake Beach Police Department	1
Round Lake Police Department	1

Royalton Police Department	0
Rushville Police Department	0
Salem Police Department	0
Sandoval Police Department	0
Sauk Village Police Department	0
Savanna Police Department	0
Schaumburg Police Department	2
Schuyler County Sheriff's Office	0
Seneca Police Department	2
Sherman Police Department	0
Shiloh Police Department	0
Shorewood Police Department	3
Sleepy Hollow Police Department	0
Smithton Police Department	0
Somonauk Police Department	0
South Holland Police Department	0
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Police Department	0
Southwestern Illinois College Police Department	0
Sparta Police Department	0
Spring Valley Police Department	0
Springfield Police Department	3
St. Clair County Sheriff's Office	1
Staunton Police Department	0
Steger Police Department	0
Stephenson County Sheriff's Office	0
Sterling Police Department	0
Stickney Police Department	0
Stonington Police Department	1
Streamwood Police Department	2
Sugar Grove Police Department	0
Sullivan Police Department	0
Swansea Police Department	1
Taylorville Police Department	1
Tazewell County Sheriff's Office	3
Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis Police Department	0
Tilton Police Department	0
Tinley Park Police Department	6
Tonica Police Department	0
Trenton Police Department	0
Triton College Police Department	1
Troy Police Department	2
Tuscola Police Department	0
University of Illinois at Chicago Police Department	0

University of Illinois Police Department - Urbana/Champaign	0
Urbana Police Department	0
Valmeyer Police Department	0
Vandalia Police Department	0
Vermilion County Sheriff's Office	2
Vernon Hills Police Department	1
Vienna Police Department	0
Villa Grove Police Department	0
Villa Park Police Department	0
Wabash County Sheriff's Office	0
Warren County Sheriff's Office	1
Washington County Sheriff's Office	0
Washington Police Department	0
Wauconda Police Department	0
Waukegan Police Department	5
Wayne Police Department	0
West Chicago Police Department	3
West Dundee Police Department	1
West Frankfort Police Department	0
Western Illinois University Office of Public Safety	0
Westmont Police Department	0
Wheaton Police Department	3
Wheeling Police Department	1
White County Sheriff's Office	0
Will County Sheriff's Office	4
Williamsville Police Department	0
Wilmette Police Department	3
Wilmington Police Department	0
Winnebago County Sheriff's Office	9
Winnetka Police Department	1
Winthrop Harbor Police Department	0
Wonder Lake Police Department	0
Wood River Police Department	0
Woodford County Sheriff's Office	1
Woodridge Police Department	1
Wyanet Police Department	0
Yorkville Police Department	1

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