

YRP launches Drone as First Responder Program

A drone could be first on the scene at emergencies across the community as the York Regional Police launch a new program.

The Drone as a First Responder will be a six-month pilot program that will see the devices installed at four police stations across York Region.

The YRP stresses the drones will not be used in active patrol, but will instead be deployed in emergency situations.

With the ability to be activated in seconds and arrive at a scene in minutes, the drones will often be the first responder at the scene, providing the ability for pilots to see what is happening on the ground, and to relay critical information to dispatchers and attending officers, says Sergeant James Dickson. This program reflects the commitment of York Regional Police to harness emerging technology and to improve the organization's ability to serve the community. Benefits include faster response times, improved safety, and smarter decision-making capabilities for officers following a call for service.

The drones will not be used for ongoing patrol; instead, they will be deployed to calls where pilots determine they could be useful. Drones are not used for surveillance and they do not automatically record photos or videos. Instead, the recording functionality must be manually activated by a pilot to capture evidence where appropriate.

By Brock Weir
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