



**2022 Surveillance Impact Report Executive Overview**

# **Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs)**

**Seattle Police Department**



## Overview

The Operational Policy statements in this document represent the only allowable uses of the equipment and data collected by this technology.

The purpose of this Executive Summary is to highlight policies, technology and practices regarding the surveillance technologies under Council review. This document outlines information, including policies and practices, about the collection, use, sharing, security and access controls for data that is gathered using a technology or program. All information provided here is contained in the body of the full SIR document but is provided in a condensed format for easier access and consideration.

### 1.0 Purpose

Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) are unarmed remote controlled vehicles utilized by SPD SWAT, Arson/Bomb, and Harbor units to access areas that are potentially dangerous for personnel to physically enter. The ROVs operated by the SWAT and Arson/Bomb units are wheeled vehicles while the ROV operated by the Harbor unit are designed as submersible underwater vehicles. All SPD ROVs are controlled by SPD employees operating handheld controllers from a safe position nearby. Some ROVs operated by SPD have a remotely controlled arm capable of performing simple tasks safely from a remote location.

This technology is used to surveil subjects and perform manual tasks from a safe position. If used out of policy or improperly this technology could potentially be used to inappropriately infringe on public privacy.

### 2.0 Data Collection and Use

Three SPD units, SWAT, Arson/Bomb, and Harbor, utilize ROVs. All of these ROVs are controlled by a handheld remote-control unit which displays the images captured by the ROV mounted cameras. The Harbor ROVs also incorporate underwater sonar imaging technology.

The SWAT unit has 7 ROV's, two (2) manufactured by Robotex, four (4) manufactured by Recon Robotics, and one (1) manufactured by Tactical Electronics. The two Robotex ROVs weigh less than 50lbs and have an onboard non-recording situational awareness camera. One of the Robotex ROVs can be equipped with remotely operated articulated gripping arm capable of performing simple tasks such as lifting light objects or opening doors. The four Recon Robotics "Throwbots" are small maneuverable ROVs designed to withstand repeated drops from up to 30 feet and are equipped with an onboard camera. The last SWAT ROV is manufactured by Tactical Electronics and is described as a "box on wheels." This ROV has no surveillance camera and is used for delivering small items between personnel without exposing them to dangerous conditions or situation.

The Arson/Bomb unit operates 5 ROVs from different manufacturers: TeleRob, Andros, ICOR, Talon, and PointMan. Each of these ROVs has a camera which transmits back to the handheld control unit. SPD does not own or utilize the available connectivity or storage devices available as add-ons for these ROVs. The Arson/Bomb ROVs have manipulator arms to remotely perform render-safe or disrupt potentially hazardous devices.

The SPD Harbor unit has 2 submersible ROV units, though one is antiquated, unused, and in storage. This older unit was manufactured by Deep Ocean Engineering and has onboard video and sonar recording capability. The active ROV utilized by the Harbor unit is manufactured by Seabotix. This unit has onboard video and sonar recording capability as well as 2 interchangeable remotely controlled articulated arms. The arms can be outfitted with either a cutting tool or a grasping claw. The video recording camera is capable of seeing approximately 10 feet in front of the ROV, depending on the clarity of the water and the depth. The sonar image can be adjusted to view up to 120 feet though the clarity of the image at that distance requires a skilled and trained individual to recognize patterns in the images.

No information is being collected from sources other than an individual, including other IT systems, systems of record, commercial data aggregators, publicly available data and/or other City departments.

### **3.0 Data Minimization & Limitations**

No images or data are stored or retained by ROVs used by SWAT or Arson/Bomb units. The Harbor unit ROVs store video and sonar imagery captured during each deployment of the unit. Only images directly related to the specific search and recovery are manually exported from the ROV's onboard hard drive if requested by SPD detectives for follow up investigation. If such a request would be made, Harbor unit personnel would save the extracted images in the DEMS Evidence system.

No information is being collected from sources other than an individual, including other IT systems, systems of record, commercial data aggregators, publicly available data and/or other City departments.

Authorized members of for the SPD SWAT, Arson/Bomb, and Harbor units are given training in the appropriate use and application of these ROVs.

What measures are in place to minimize and limit collection of data. Describe the processes that are required prior to each use, or access to/ of the project / technology, such as a notification, or check-in, check-out of equipment.



## 4.0 Access & Security

### Access

Authorized members of for the SPD SWAT, Arson/Bomb, and Harbor units are given training in the appropriate use and application of these ROVs. Unit commanders are responsible to ensure usage of the technology falls within appropriate usage.

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When the Harbor ROV is utilized in the recovery of a body, information such as water temperature, GPS location, and water depth are recorded.

### Security

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## 5.0 Data Sharing and Accuracy

Only images directly related to the specific search and recovery are manually exported from the ROV's onboard hard drive if requested by SPD detectives for follow up investigation. If such a request would be made, Harbor unit personnel would save the extracted images in the DEMS Evidence system. When the Harbor ROV is utilized in the recovery of a body, information such as water temperature, GPS location, and water depth are recorded and shared with the Medical Examiner's Office.

No person, outside of SPD, has direct access to the ROVs or the data while it resides in the device.

Data obtained from the system may be shared outside SPD with the other agencies, entities, or individuals within legal guidelines or as required by law.

Data may be shared with outside entities in connection with criminal prosecutions:

- Seattle City Attorney's Office
- King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- King County Department of Public Defense



- Private Defense Attorneys
- Seattle Municipal Court
- King County Superior Court
- Similar entities where prosecution is in Federal or other State jurisdictions

Data may be made available to requesters pursuant to the Washington Public Records Act, [Chapter 42.56 RCW](#) (“PRA”). SPD will apply applicable exemptions to the data before disclosing to a requester. Individuals have the right to inspect criminal history record information maintained by the department ([RCW 10.97.030](#), [SPD Policy 12.050](#)). Individuals can access their own information by submitting a public disclosure request.

Per [SPD Policy 12.080](#), the Crime Records Unit is responsible for receiving, recording, and responding to requests “for General Offense Reports from other City departments and from other law enforcement agencies, as well as from insurance companies.”

Discrete pieces of data collected by ROVs may be shared with other law enforcement agencies in wanted bulletins, and in connection with law enforcement investigations jointly conducted with those agencies, or in response to requests from law enforcement agencies investigating criminal activity as governed by [SPD Policy 12.050](#) and [12.110](#). All requests for data from Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) authorities are referred to the Mayor’s Office Legal Counsel in accordance with the Mayoral Directive, dated February 6, 2018.

SPD shares data with authorized researchers pursuant to properly execute research and confidentiality agreements as provide by [SPD Policy 12.055](#). This sharing may include discrete pieces of data related to specific investigative files collected by the devices.

Data sharing is necessary for SPD to fulfill its mission of contributing to crime reduction by assisting in collecting evidence related to serious and/or violent criminal activity as part of investigation, and to comply with legal requirements.

## **6.0 Data Retention**

Unit supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with data retention requirements within SPD.

SPD’s Intelligence and Analysis Section reviews the audit logs and ensures compliance with all regulations and requirements.

Audit, Policy & Research Section personnel can also conduct audits of all data collection software and systems. Additionally, any appropriate auditor, including the Office of Inspector General and the federal monitor can audit for compliance at any time. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with data retention requirements within SPD.

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