Surveillance Impact Report

FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot
San Diego Police Department

DESCRIPTION

The FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot is a throwable, rugged, expandable robot that provides immediate situational awareness, performs persistent observation and investigates dangerous and hazardous material while maintaining a safe, stand-off distance for operators. The robot allows operations where other robots cannot fit or maneuver. This rugged, lightweight robot can be inserted into structures, providing operators with visual, audio, and sensor feedback before entry. The robot climbs small obstacles, overcomes curbs, turns in place and self-rights when flipped over.

The robot has four cameras along with white and infrared light to help the operator see into dark spaces. The cameras send a signal to a monitor/controller held by the operator, allowing them to search an area in all lighting conditions.

PURPOSE

The FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot supports first responders during critical incidents by providing real-time video imagery and live audio via a remotely operated ground-based robot.

LOCATION

The FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot is used anywhere the SWAT unit is called to complete a mission assigned by an incident commander.

City of San Diego crime statistics can be viewed at Crime Statistics & Crime Mapping | Police | City of San Diego Official Website.

IMPACT

The FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot is only used by the SWAT team after being called to a location to complete a mission.

During all operations, the Robot Operator is trained to make every effort only to capture visual imagery of the law enforcement contact or intended target of observation to protect the privacy of nearby uninvolved citizens and their property.

The San Diego Police Department's FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot Surveillance Use Policy safeguards civil liberties and civil rights. The uses and deployments of surveillance technology are not based upon discriminatory or viewpoint-based factors. The Department's use of surveillance technology is intended to support and benefit the communities of San Diego while minimizing and mitigating potential impacts on the civil rights and civil liberties of community members.

MITIGATIONS

The following rules and processes are required prior to each use of a FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot:

- All requests for the FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot support can be initiated by any personnel who are or plan to be a part of a response to support a specific incident or event with a specific support objective.
- A SWAT supervisor must evaluate the request and approve the operation prior to deployment to support each incident. The SWAT supervisor is specially trained to assess the request and determine if the FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot operation will comply with the SDPD's authorized uses for the equipment.
- Only authorized members of the SWAT team shall use or be in possession of the FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot.

The FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robots are only deployed with prior approval to specific, high-risk incidents with a specific objective. During all operations, the Robot Operator is trained to make every effort only to capture visual imagery of the law enforcement contact or intended target of observation to protect the privacy of nearby uninvolved citizens and their property.

DATA TYPES AND SOURCES

The FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot can observe live video in both the visual and infrared spectrum, commonly known as "IR," "Night Vision," or "Low-Light" vision and send that video back to the operator's display screen. The robot does not record or have the ability to record video or take photographs.

The FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot is equipped with a microphone and can hear live audio and relay that sound back to the operator's controller. The robot does not record or have the ability to record audio.

The FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robots are only deployed with prior approval to specific, high-risk incidents with a specific objective.

DATA SECURITY

The FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot is unable to record audio or video, and thus, there is no data to access, retain or protect.

FISCAL COST

The Department has two FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robots costing $20,000 each. The SWAT unit has an annual $10,000 purchase order to maintain the equipment.

THIRD PARTY DEPENDENCE

The FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) is not dependent on any third party as the robot does not record audio or video.

ALTERNATIVES

The only other alternative to ground-based robots, such as the FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot, would be an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). All other devices that provide a video image with the ability to converse and listen to the surroundings could place a human operator in a dangerous position due to the inability to control the camera from a distance. Other ground-based robot companies offer similar robots that function in relatively the same manner at a similar cost.

TRACK RECORD

Robots have played a significant role in law enforcement for the last decade. Many incidents nationwide have come to a peaceful resolution or prevented catastrophic incidents from happening due to their use. The SDPD SWAT team has used robots to identify suspects hiding inside structures. The SDPD SWAT team has been able to use this information to come up with plans to apprehend the suspect in a manner that is not only safer for the operators but also for the suspect and the public. Other government entities have used robots in different situations, such as building collapses, search and rescue incidents, and other critical incidents.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMENTS

On February 22, 2024, at 1815 hours, there was a publicly held meeting in all nine council districts in the City of San Diego. The following surveillance technologies were presented by the San Diego Police Department:

1. 836 Technologies Tactical Throw Phone
2. 836 Technologies CINT Commander II
3. FLIR FirstLook (Gen 1) Robot
4. FLIR FirstLook (Gen 2) Robot
5. ICOR Mini-Caliber Robot
6. SWIFT Under Door Camera

There were no attendees in District 1. There was one attendee in District 2. There were three attendees in District 3. There were four attendees in District 4. There were no attendees in District 5. There were no attendees in District 6. There were no attendees in District 7. There were no attendees in District 8. There were no attendees in District 9. There was one question and no comments out of the eight attendees. There were two emailed comments. There were no comments submitted to the online public comment form.

Comments #1:

> I would greatly appreciate visuals/ pictures of each technology; especially, perhaps, in the videos of these technologies. The SDPD personnel do a lovely and professional job of talking about each technology; however, the one thing that cries out to be included is a picture or some other type of visual aid of each technology. As the laymen public, we do not have a visual familiarity of what is being described. The public doesn't appear to be the intended audience of these videos.

Comments #2:

In regards to the Speaker Request Form process - I would like a more user-friendly timing to submit our request to speak. The current timing is that our request must be submitted BEFORE the presentation ends. That means that we cannot comfortably listen to the (rather short) presentation, but must be deciding and writing up our request instead. My observation of last Thursday's meeting is that there was ample time to allow maybe a 3-5 minute break after the presentation ends for the public attendees to gather their thoughts and submit their request.

Question #1:

Question regarding community meetings. Good evening. My name is Community Member, but everyone knows me as Community Member from the southeast San Diego area. I was always taught by my mom not to speak unless you have your facts. I noticed by looking around today that there are not a lot of people here. They talk but I don't see them here to learn the facts and to ask questions. Let's find out what is going on. That's what you guys are providing today, and I appreciate that information. That's why I'm here, to get the correct information and to ask questions that everyone wants to know.

I'm asking for the community to come together. They need to come to these meetings that are desperately needed to put aside all those problems that people have. If you want to learn, you have to be here to learn.

Also, how can we get more information online? So, we can share with the ones who can't come here. We need to be the voice for each other. Many people don't trust the badge for various reasons. But that's when we step up as a community member and as a mentor to the younger people to deliver this information. But we can't give something that we don't know if we are not here. When I give out information, I want to be able to know that when I tell somebody something I'm giving the facts that I learned at the meeting.

I'm pleading for the community members who are mentors and leaders to be here. Not just for themselves but for the people that they are standing up for. I thank you guys for what you are doing. I do have many questions about that. There are certain things that are amazing and great for the officers, but also the personal touch part. That's something we can all work on together, and I'm sure other people have those questions. I thank you guys for giving me my time and allowing me to speak on behalf of our community.

Answer #1:

The notice for this community event was posted on February 14, 2024. The information can be found on the Police Department's social media sites. Our Community Relations Officers put out the information, and it's also sent out to all the council districts.

To maximize the reach of the materials presented at the community meetings, the Police Department created a link to the City of San Diego's technology website, which provides all materials for presented technologies as well as upcoming technologies and additional materials. The materials and questions/comments section can be accessed by visiting the web address below:

www.sandiego.gov/police/technology. The web address was posted in conjunction with the QR code at the community meeting.

The Department also video-recorded a meeting so that it could be presented to a larger group. The benefit of the video was the capability of translating the presentation into over 100 languages, such as Spanish and other languages frequently used by the communities within San Diego, to maximize penetration of the materials to affected groups. The link to the video is at the San Diego Police Department's YouTube channel under Surveillance Technology Community Meeting 02/22/2024 - YouTube