



**REMOTE CONTROLLED ROBOTS:
“THROWBOTS”
IMPACT AND USE POLICY**

UPDATED: FEBRUARY 4, 2026

REMOTE CONTROLLED ROBOTS: “THROWBOTS” REVISION

Date of Revision	Description of Revision
February 4, 2026	This impact and use policy was revised to comply with the recently passed amendment to the POST Act, Local Law 56 of 2025. While previously categorized under the situational awareness cameras impact and use policy, due to the differing functionality of the “Throwbots”, this separate impact and use policy has been drafted.

ABSTRACT

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) utilizes a variety of unmanned ground vehicles to enable NYPD personnel to safely and remotely access potentially dangerous situations, such as search-and-rescue operations, evidence searches at inaccessible locations, incidents involving hostages, barricaded suspects, or hazardous material, and counterterrorism situations.

These devices often face some limitations, including difficulty navigating complex terrains, becoming entangled in debris, restricted camera angles, inadequate illumination, and video/image transmission issues. To address some of these deficiencies, the NYPD has acquired industrial-grade remote-controlled robots, commonly known as “Throwbots,” manufactured by ReconRobotics.

The NYPD produced this impact and use policy because Throwbots are capable of processing and transmitting live video imagery and acoustic data to remote controllers that are operated by trained NYPD personnel.

CAPABILITIES OF THE TECHNOLOGY

Background Information: Throwbots are compact, throwable micro-robots designed specifically for rapid remote video and audio reconnaissance, enabling NYPD personnel to obtain immediate situational awareness before entering potentially dangerous or unknown environments. Throwbots are intended to reduce risk to personnel, preserve human life, and support informed tactical decision-making during emergency and exigent operations. Throwbots are particularly suited for hostage or barricade incidents, bomb threats, suspicious packages, hazardous-materials environments, search-and-rescue operations, and other scenarios requiring rapid interior reconnaissance prior to human entry.

Physical Description: Throwbots are compact, lightweight, throwable micro-robotic reconnaissance device weighing approximately 1.3 pounds. Their durable structure allows them to withstand repeated and significant impacts, including drops of up to approximately 30 feet, enabling deployment through doorways, windows, or other access points.

Operation: Throwbots are manually operated under continuous human control using a handheld controller, which provides the operator with real-time video and audio from the device. The operator remotely controls Throwbots’ movements to obtain immediate situational awareness. Throwbots do not operate autonomously or make independent decisions.

Technology Capabilities: Throwbots are equipped with a forward-facing color camera that transmits real-time video to a controller, allowing NYPD personnel to observe interior spaces remotely. The device also includes integrated infrared illumination, enabling visibility in low-light or dark environments without external lighting. Throwbots are capable of transmitting audio through an onboard microphone, allowing operators to hear sounds within the deployment area.

Transmittal of Information: Throwbots transmit live video images and audio from the device to a controller operated by trained NYPD personnel at or near the deployment scene. The transmission occurs over a secure wireless connection, with a tested operational range of approximately 150 feet in indoor, non-line-of-sight environments and up to 450 feet outdoors in line-of-sight conditions, depending on environmental factors. The NYPD does not record, store, or retain video or audio data

transmitted by Throwbots.

Battery Use: Throwbots are powered by a rechargeable lithium ion battery that allows for up to 110 minutes of operation under normal conditions, and have an observation mode of 160 minutes. Charging is performed using manufacturer-provided charging equipment and in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and applicable safety guidelines.

RULES, PROCESSES & GUIDELINES RELATING TO USE OF THE TECHNOLOGY

NYPD’s Throwbots must be used in a manner consistent with the requirements and protection of the Constitution of the United States, the New York State Constitution, and applicable statutory authorities.

Request for Use: NYPD Throwbots may only be used by NYPD personnel for legitimate law enforcement purposes. Only members of NYPD Emergency Services Unit (ESU) or Technical Assistance Response Unit (TARU) are authorized to use Throwbots and personnel must be trained in their use and appropriate application. The operator is responsible for ensure safety surrounding the use of Throwbots. If necessary, NYPD personnel will request assistance from Emergency Services Unit (ESU) or Technical Assistance Response Unit (TARU). An ESU or TARU supervisor will determine if the use of Throwbots is appropriate.

Court Authorization: The NYPD does not seek court authorization before using Throwbots because it is only utilized during limited and exigent circumstances in emergency environments.

Restrictions in Use: NYPD policy specifically prohibits the use of Throwbots for surveillance, routine patrol with officers, traffic enforcement, crowd control, or immobilizing a vehicle or suspect. Additionally, the NYPD does not use facial recognition or any other biometric measuring technologies with Throwbots. Throwbots are not designed for or equipped with any weaponry, nor for offensive or enforcement actions.

Additional Guidelines: Throwbots are not used for investigating political activity. NYPD investigations involving political activity are conducted by the Intelligence Division, which is the sole entity in the NYPD that may conduct investigations involving political activities pursuant to the Revised *Handschu* Guidelines.

As with all NYPD operations, no person will be the subject of police action because of actual or perceived race, color, religion or creed, age, national origin, alienage, citizenship status, gender (including gender identity), sexual orientation, disability, marital status, partnership status, military status, or political affiliation or beliefs.

The misuse of Throwbots will subject employees to administrative and potentially criminal penalties.

Addendum Obligation: In accordance with the Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology Act, an addendum to this impact and use policy will be prepared as necessary to describe any additional uses of “Throwbots.

SAFEGUARD & SECURITY MEASURES AGAINST UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS

Physical Safeguard & Security Measures: Throwbots are securely stored within NYPD facilities when not in use, in a location inaccessible to the public. Additionally, a supervisor must periodically inspect and account for the devices. Supervisors of personnel utilizing Throwbots are responsible for security and proper utilization of the technology and associated equipment. Only authorized NYPD personnel have access to Throwbots and the remote controllers that receive the transmissions and control its movements.

Access to Throwbots is limited to NYPD personnel with an articulable need to use the technology in furtherance of a lawful duty. Access to Throwbots is determined by an officer’s assignment and is rescinded when that officer’s assignment no longer requires its use.

Data Safeguard & Security Measures: Throwbots transmits live video images and acoustic data to a remote controller through an encrypted and secure signal. The NYPD does not record, store, or retain any video image or acoustic data transmitted by Throwbots.

Unauthorized access of any system will subject employees to administrative and potentially criminal penalties.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES RELATING TO RETENTION, ACCESS, & USE OF THE DATA

The NYPD does not record, store, or retain any video image or acoustic data transmitted by Throwbots.

The NYPD retains and disposes of records pursuant to New York City Charter § 1133(f), (g) and (h). Pursuant to these provisions, the NYPD developed a retention schedule that was approved by the New York City Law Department and Department of Records and Information Services. This retention schedule governs the retention and disposition of NYPD records, and the NYPD retains and disposes of records pursuant to this schedule. The retention period of a “case investigation record” depends on its classification and is based on the final disposition of the case, i.e., what the arrestee is convicted of or pleads to. Further, case investigations are not considered closed unless they result in: prosecution and appeals are exhausted, a settlement, no arrest, or when restitution is no longer sought.

The misuse of any data will subject employees to administrative and potentially criminal penalties.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES RELATING TO PUBLIC ACCESS OR USE OF THE DATA

Members of the public may request information or data related to the NYPD’s use of Throwbots pursuant to the New York State Freedom of Information Law. However, the NYPD does not record, store, or retain video or acoustic data processed by Throwbots and would be unable to provide same.

EXTERNAL ENTITIES

Entities outside of the NYPD do not have direct access to the live feed collected by NYPD’s Throwbots. The NYPD does not record, store, or retain any video image or acoustic data transmitted by Throwbots.

Vendors & Contractors: The NYPD purchases Throwbots and associated equipment or software from approved vendors. The NYPD emphasizes the importance of and engages with vendors and contractors to maintain the confidentiality, availability, and integrity of NYPD technology systems.

Vendors and contractors may have access to Throwbots’ associated software in the performance of contractual duties to the NYPD. Such duties are typically technical or proprietary in nature (e.g., maintenance or failure mitigation). In providing vendors and contractors access to equipment and computer systems, the NYPD follows the principle of least privilege. Vendors and contractors are only allowed access on a “need to know basis” to fulfill contractual obligations and/or agreements.

Vendors and contractors providing equipment and services to the NYPD undergo vendor responsibility determination and integrity reviews. Vendors and contractors providing sensitive equipment and services to the NYPD also undergo background checks.

Vendors and contractors are legally obligated by contracts and/or agreements to maintain the confidentiality of NYPD data and information. Vendors and contractors are subject to criminal and civil penalties for unauthorized use or disclosure of NYPD data or information.

TRAINING

Only trained NYPD personnel can operate Throwbots. NYPD personnel utilizing Throwbots receive command-level training on the proper operation of Throwbots and the associated equipment. NYPD personnel must operate Throwbots in compliance with NYPD policies and training.

INTERNAL AUDIT & OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS

Only members of the NYPD ESU or TARU are authorized to use Throwbots. ESU and TARU personnel are specifically trained in their use and in appropriate application. Use of Throwbots is a strategic decision made by ESU or TARU personnel during law-enforcement encounters where ESU or TARU responds to requests for assistance.

Supervisors of personnel utilizing Throwbots are responsible for security and proper utilization of the technology and associated equipment.

The misuse of any NYPD equipment will subject employees to administrative and potentially criminal penalties.

HEALTH & SAFETY REPORTING

There are no known tests or reports regarding the health and safety effects of Throwbots. Throwbots are designed to be safe and effective when utilized under the criteria explained in the ‘Rules, Processes & Guidelines Relating to Use of the Technology’ section of this impact and use policy.

The NYPD only allows the operation of Throwbots by trained professionals.

Prohibitions: Throwbots’s manufacturer explicitly prohibits attempting to service, disassemble, or modify the robot or controller themselves. It is prohibited to operate the robot or OCU while operating a vehicle or to use the system with unapproved third-party products and accessories. Inserting foreign objects into the devices or immersing the OCU and chargers in water or liquids is strictly forbidden and may cause electric shock or system failure.

Operational Safety Risks: Negligent or reckless use, intentional misuse, or use of the Throwbots for unauthorized purposes can result in fire, personal injury, and damage to property. Failure to request service upon discovery of a malfunction or continued use after signs of malfunction poses a significant safety risk. To reduce the risk of electric shock, the shells of the robot and controller must not be opened, as they contain no user-serviceable parts. Misuse of Throwbots can potentially result in severe personal injuries, significant material hazards, or even death.

Collision/Fall Safety: Throwbots in bad weather such as strong winds, rain, or sandstorms, may impact stability. Operators should also be aware of environments with high electromagnetic interference, such as mining areas, radio transmission towers, or high-voltage wires, as signal disruption can affect control. Users must stay alert for excessive lag or unexplained mechanical movements, which may indicate unauthorized frequency access or technical failure.

Battery Safety: Throwbots are powered by a lithium ion battery pack. The NYPD only uses and charges Throwbots with manufacturer accessories to reduce the risk of fire or electric shock. The manufacturer also directs that Throwbots’ battery should not be short-circuited, burned, disassembled, submerged, punctured, crushed, dropped, or damaged. It is extremely unlikely that the battery would generate a fire under normal conditions of use.

DISPARATE IMPACTS OF THE TECHNOLOGY & IMPACT & USE POLICY

The NYPD has implemented significant safeguards to ensure that Throwbots are used effectively and responsibly. The NYPD does not believe that this technology is being used in a manner that disparately impacts any protected groups as defined in the New York City Human Rights Law.

The safeguards and audit protocols built into this impact and use policy for Throwbots help to mitigate the risk of partial and biased law enforcement. Throwbots are a reactive technology that is used as a tool to support de-escalation efforts without endangering officers, subjects of observation, or the general public. The NYPD explicitly does not use Throwbots for routine patrol or general surveillance of the public, nor is it equipped with any weaponry. Instead, Throwbots are strictly deployed in emergency situations, where its capabilities can enhance officer safety and operational effectiveness. Additionally, Throwbots does not record, store, or retain any video or acoustic data. Based on these safeguards, any theoretical risks of Throwbots are effectively mitigated and do not result in disparate impacts.

The NYPD is committed to the impartial enforcement of the law and to the protection of constitutional rights. The NYPD prohibits the use of racial and bias-based profiling in law enforcement actions, which must be based on standards required by the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution, Sections 11 and 12 of Article I of the New York State

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Constitution, Section 14-151 of the New York City Administrative Code, and other applicable laws.

Race, color, ethnicity, or national origin may not be used as a motivating factor for initiating police enforcement action. Should an officer initiate enforcement action against a person, motivated even in part by a person’s actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, or national origin, that enforcement action violates NYPD policy unless the officer’s decision is based on a specific and reliable suspect description that includes not only race, age, and gender, but other identifying characteristics or information.