



**City of Houston
Building Code Enforcement
CODE WORD 2021**

INTERPRETATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF
THE HOUSTON ADOPTED CODES,
2021 IBC, 2021 IRC, 2021 IFC, 2021 IEBC, 2021 UMC, 2021 UPC,
2021 IECC and ASHRAE 90.1-2019, 2021 ISPSC, & 2023 NEC
Published 01-02-2024

CW No:	2021 – A01	Page:	1	of	2
PUBLICATION:	February 23, 2026				
SUBJECT:	Policy: Drone Delivery Sites / Stations				
CODE(S):	Houston Construction Code / Code of Ordinances				
SECTION(S)	IBC Sections 104.1 & 105; IFC and NEC (as applicable)				

Background / Details

This Code Word is intended to provide consistent guidance for permitting and review of drone delivery sites (also referred as “drone delivery stations”), including associated pads/landing areas, appurtenant structures, equipment, and utility/power features. This policy is issued under the Building Official’s authority to render interpretations and adopt policies and procedures clarifying application of the adopted code.

For purposes of this policy, where proposed drone delivery facilities are limited to unoccupied accessory structures/equipment (pads/platforms, cabinets, racks, screens, similar appurtenances) in support of a primary occupancy, such components are generally anticipated to be evaluated as accessory in nature (often consistent with Group U accessory structures where applicable), subject to the Building Official’s determination and the adopted codes.

Drone delivery pads, structures, and/or equipment may be treated as an accessory site function when they are located on the same property (or under the same site control/leasehold) as the primary use, and the drone operations are incidental and subordinate to the primary occupancy (e.g., warehouse, distribution, retail, etc.) with no independent tenant space, public assembly, or staffed occupant area associated with the drone facility.

Scope / Policy

This policy applies when a project includes any dedicated drone delivery operations area, proposed as an accessory site function, and includes but is not limited to:

- Drone landing/takeoff pads or elevated platforms
- Drone staging areas, storage, charging, swap/charging cabinets, maintenance/repair areas
- Canopies, screens/walls, fencing, gates, bollards, equipment racks
- Site/electrical work: panels, feeders, disconnects, underground/overhead service, lighting, receptacles, communications equipment
- Power sources: generators, battery/inverter systems, fuel tanks, etc.

Drone delivery sites/stations that function as an independent principal use (standalone configurations) shall be classified and permitted based on their actual use/function as determined by the Authority Having Jurisdiction and may require additional permitting/approvals beyond those typical for accessory structures.

Permit Submittal Requirements

Construction documents shall include, as applicable, the following:

- Site plan showing property lines, buildings, drone landing/takeoff area(s), equipment locations, clearances/setbacks to property lines and adjacent structures, access gates, and fire access provisions.



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- Equipment schedule/cutsheets for charging cabinets, shelters, platforms, communications gear, and any power equipment.
- Electrical one-lines and load calculations, including demand for chargers and any standby and/or temporary power provisions.
- Operations narrative describing use (delivery-only vs. staging/maintenance), hours of operation, number/type of drones, etc.
- Documented evidence of applicable Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and National Aerospace System (NAS) approvals and/or authorizations confirming the proposed drone delivery site/station (and associated operations) is permitted to operate at the proposed location, including any required waivers, authorizations, or operating limitations/conditions.

Power Source Policy

Permanent utility power

Where a drone delivery site is intended to operate beyond initial commissioning, permanent power shall be permitted and provided (electrical permit(s) and service approvals as applicable). Temporary power allowances below are not a substitute for permanent service.

Temporary diesel/gas generator use

Temporary use of diesel or gasoline generators may be allowed only for initial startup/commissioning, subject to all applicable permits and Houston *Fire Code* requirements, and limited as follows:

- Initial allowance: up to 90 days from the documented date the site begins drone delivery operations (or energization/commissioning date, as determined by the AHJ).
NOTE: Extensions will be strictly limited and may be granted only with justifiable cause and requests to extend temporary operation shall require documentation showing **a)** an active permit path for permanent utility power, and **b)** an installation schedule/utility coordination.
- Generator installation shall be shown on plans and include, but not be limited to, the rating (kW), fuel type(s), method/quantity of fuel storage, separation/clearances, protection from vehicle impact where applicable, exhaust routing/clearances, and required disconnecting means.

Battery generators / portable battery-inverter systems

Requests to use battery-based generators (portable battery/inverter systems, trailer-mounted battery packs, containerized battery units, etc.) will be evaluated on a case-by-case and shall generally require an Alternate Method (AM) submittal demonstrating equivalency to the Houston *Construction Code*, including listing/labeling documentation, installation details, protection features, and any Houston *Fire Code* implications (battery chemistry, energy capacity, location, ventilation, thermal management, emergency shutdown, signage, separation / exposure considerations, and firefighting access).

Additional Considerations

Drone delivery sites/stations shall meet all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and National Aerospace System (NAS) requirements for operation.

Drone delivery sites/stations are subject to any applicable regulations provided in Chapter 30 (Noise and Sound Level Regulation) of the Houston *Code of Ordinances*.

Installation of any buildings, structures, electrical work, equipment, etc. that is regulated by the Houston *Construction Code* shall require applicable permits and inspections prior to operation.

Approved: _____

Christopher Shannahan, CBO, FM
Houston Building Official