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Miami police launch drone program to patrol downtown, Brickell and Edgewater

[Miami police](#) have launched a new drone designed to patrol the skies over the city's downtown core, adding what officials say is an important tool to improve public safety.

Drone to patrol key neighborhoods

The drone launches from the roof of police headquarters and is meant to monitor downtown, Edgewater and Brickell. The three neighborhoods are part of a newly centralized police district.

Police Chief Manny Morales said the program is funded by a grant from the Downtown Development Authority.

"The calls will come up, it will select a priority, and it will dispatch. It will be on scene two minutes," Morales said in an Instagram video posted by Miami police.

Drone already in use

Police said the drone has already been deployed. Earlier this month, it helped locate an injured woman in a boat in Biscayne Bay.

While the technology has not yet led to arrests, officials say it is only the beginning of a larger effort to use aerial surveillance as a policing tool.

Commissioner: Drone supplements officers

City Commissioner Ralph Rosado, who also serves as chairman of the Downtown Development Authority, said the drone reflects the need to keep up with Miami's rapid growth.

"Downtown Miami is absolutely booming. So we've gotta make sure to allocate more resources. I've been very supportive of having more police officers, but this is something that's an important supplement to our on the ground officers," Rosado said.

Alongside the drone, the DDA is also funding new mounted police horses, additional security cameras and overtime pay for increased patrols.

Safety concerns and community response

For longtime Miami resident Antonieta Borge, safety concerns have made her hesitant to visit downtown as often as she once did.

"The only thing to go buy anything was downtown. But then it became a little unsafe," Borge said. She believes the new initiatives could restore her confidence.



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Unique Monthly Visitors: 56,800

"If I see that there's safety, they're patrolling more and keep their eyes on the unsafe parts, of course," she said.

Looking ahead: City plans to add 300 officers

The city of Miami plans to add around 300 new police officers over the next three years. Commissioner Rosado said his long-term vision includes expanding the drone program.

Eventually, he said, he would like to create a fleet of drones capable of covering the entire city.