

16 March 2026

To whom it may concern,

Building on Florida's national leadership in the integration of small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) into emergency management and disaster response, the **Catastrophic UAS Remote Sensing Exercise (CURSE) 2026** is designed to evaluate and strengthen how sUAS capabilities support multi-agency decision-making during large-scale incidents. Lessons from recent major disasters continue to demonstrate that sUAS platforms are critical tools for situational awareness, damage assessment, search operations, as well as operational coordination across response and recovery phases.

CURSE 2026 is a full-scale, capability-focused exercise that examines the end-to-end integration of sUAS operations into emergency management systems. The exercise emphasizes operational coordination, airspace and mission deconfliction, data management, and the effective use of remotely sensed information to support command, planning, and policy decisions at the local, state, and federal levels.

Hosted by Florida State University's Emergency Management and Homeland Security Program in partnership with federal, state, local, and industry stakeholders, CURSE 2026 will be conducted in several locations across Florida with opportunities for both in-person and remote participation. This hybrid participation model enables agencies and organizations to engage regardless of travel constraints, while still operating within a common operational and data environment.

Through scenario-driven operations, CURSE 2026 provides participants hands-on experience in coordinating sUAS missions, managing and sharing aerial data, and translating remotely sensed information into actionable intelligence that informs emergency management decision-making. The exercise is structured to directly support capability assessment, identify operational gaps, and inform future doctrine, training, and investment in sUAS-enabled disaster response.

The broad objectives for this exercise are:

- Validate **coordinated distributed UAS data collection operations** conducted from home jurisdictions at statewide scale.
- Assess the **timeliness and reliability of data transfer and integration** into a centralized Remote Sensing Cell.
- Evaluate the **operational utility of AI-enabled damage assessment tools** within real-world remote sensing workflows.
- Measure the **effectiveness of the Remote Sensing Cell** as a statewide fusion, analysis, and coordination hub.
- Identify **doctrine, staffing, workflow, and technology gaps** that limit scalable UAS-enabled disaster response.



# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HOMELAND SECURITY

All sUAS teams and resources that may participate in disaster response or recovery, to include local missions, State Mutual Assistance, or EMAC are invited and encouraged to participate. Participation is free, though the exercise design team does not have funding to support travel or backfill costs.

The exercise will take place on 19 MAY 2026, with training workshops to be held in the weeks leading up to the full-scale. Organizations that wish to participate can register and get more information at the website: <https://em.fsu.edu/curse>

Very Respectfully,

**David Merrick**

*Director*

FSU Emergency Management and Homeland Security Program

850-644-9961 (office) // 850-980-7098 (cell)