

Axon Announces TASER Drone Development to Address Mass Shootings

Remotely operated, non-lethal drones key in long-term plan to detect and stop mass shootings in less than 60 seconds

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., June 2, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- [Axon](#) (NASDAQ: [AXON](#)), the global leader in connected public safety technologies, today announced it has formally begun development of a non-lethal, remotely-operated TASER drone system as part of a long-term plan to stop mass shootings, and reaffirmed it is committed to public engagement and dialogue during the development process. This includes accelerating detection and improving real-time situational awareness of active shooter events, enhancing first responder effectiveness through VR training, and deploying remotely operated non-lethal drones capable of incapacitating an active shooter in less than 60 seconds.

"Today, the only viable response to a mass shooter is another person with a gun," says Axon CEO and founder Rick Smith. "In the aftermath of these events, we get stuck in fruitless debates. We need new and better solutions. For this reason, we have elected to publicly engage communities and stakeholders, and develop a remotely operated, non-lethal drone system that we believe will be a more effective, immediate, humane, and ethical option to protect innocent people."

"In my 2019 book, [The End of Killing](#), I described in detail how such a system could work, as illustrated in this [graphic novel](#). Now is the time to make this technology a reality—and to begin a robust public discussion around how to ethically introduce non-lethal drones into schools. I proposed the Three Laws of First Responder Robotics to lay the groundwork of an ethical and legal framework to safeguard these systems so that we can improve public safety and avoid misuse. Today is the next step as Axon will begin formal product development on technology centered around these ideas," continues Smith.

The non-lethal drone is part of a three-part strategy to stop mass shooter events:

1 - Integrate camera networks and other sensors into real-time communications with first responders.

Axon recently announced a partnership with Fusus, which allows schools, businesses or other enterprises to easily connect and share security camera feeds with local public safety and other security partners. With this integration, Axon body cameras, Axon Fleet dashboard cameras, and Axon Air-powered drones with the Fusus network will provide real-time access to a wide network of sensors during critical events. Fusus gives full and secure control of data sharing to the owner of each camera and sensor, so they can choose exactly when access is shared and with whom. This is available today through the partnership with [Fusus](#).

"Trying to find and stop an active shooter based on the telephone game connecting victim 911 callers is antiquated," says Chris Lindenau, CEO of Fusus. "Fusus brings the ability to share any security camera to first responders, providing known locations and visual live feeds regardless of which security cameras they use. This network of cameras, with human and AI monitoring, together with panic buttons and other local communication tools, can detect and ID a threat before a shot is fired and dramatically improve response times and situational awareness."

2 - Enhance first responder effectiveness through immersive Virtual Reality (VR) Active Shooter Response Training. Axon recently launched [Virtual Reality Simulator Training](#) to provide highly immersive and engaging training experiences for public safety. Through partnerships with key expert and stakeholder groups, Axon will develop and deliver more effective training for responding to mass shooting events in the next 12 months.

3 - Enable immediate threat incapacitation through remotely operated, non-lethal drone capability. Axon is actively developing a miniaturized, lightweight TASER payload capable of being deployed on a small drone or robot. Axon has begun collaborating with our partner DroneSense on a remote piloting capability and our imaging team will develop the targeting algorithms to assist operators in properly and safely aiming the device. Note that all use-of-force decisions will be made by an authenticated and authorized human operator who has agreed to take legal and moral responsibility for any force actions initiated. Axon is collaborating with a variety of drone hardware providers and will make a selection later this year on final development partner(s). Functional proof of concept will be available in 2023 with a full solution ready in 2024.

"In 2020, [3,500](#) people died in fires in the United States. That same year, [45,222](#) people died of firearm related

injuries. There are over 10 million fire hydrants pre-emplaced in the United States, and every modern building has fire suppression systems to contain fires until fire-fighters can arrive," notes Smith. "I believe we can create systems that can detect, deter, and ultimately stop a shooter within a building for a comparable cost as, or less than, fire suppression systems."

Ethical and Regulatory Framework

To ensure the safe, responsible, and transparent deployment of this technology, Axon is integrating the Authentication, Authorization, and Accountability (AAA) Control System. This comprehensive framework ensures only approved and highly trained users can operate and activate the system, and that an end-to-end audit trail is retained, providing 100% transparency on the deployment and engagement of every remotely operated TASER system. The AAA Control System is key to implementing Axon's 3 Laws of First Responder Robotics. These three laws developed in discussions with various experts, stakeholders and the general public will continue to evolve to ensure Axon understands and mitigates risks associated with this new technology to the greatest degree possible.

Axon's Three Laws of First Responder Drones

- **Humans must own decisions and remain accountable.** Robots must be controlled by authenticated human operators who accept legal and moral responsibility for any decision that impacts a human subject.
- **Drones should be used to save lives, not take them.** Operators of drones who are not in immediate danger are duty bound to de-escalate whenever possible and deploy the minimal force necessary. Only non-deadly force should be used.
- **Agencies must provide rigorous oversight and transparency to ensure acceptable use.** Institutions operating robots capable of deploying force must develop publicly available policies describing in advance the types of circumstances in which robots should be deployed. Every incident of force deployed from a robotic system shall be recorded with audio-video and operational data to be reviewed by an oversight committee.

Axon views the design and implementation of the regulatory, legal and ethical framework of equal importance to the technology development. We have begun and will continue collaboration with various regulatory agencies and legislative bodies to ensure these powerful new capabilities are appropriately regulated and controlled to maximize the life saving potential while minimizing the opportunity for misuse or abuse.

Public and Partner Engagement

"To make the future different than the past, we must try new approaches. I believe that a remotely operated, non-lethal drone is far safer than sending an armed human being into a volatile setting. I also realize this is a transformative change, and I am committed to listening to concerns and feedback over the next several years as we move through development," concludes Rick Smith.

The Axon AI Ethics Board has reviewed police use of remotely operated, non-lethal drones, prior to the mass shootings in Buffalo and Uvalde. The majority of the board voted to advise Axon not to proceed and plans to issue a report in the Fall of 2022. However, given these tragic mass shootings, Axon has asked the board to re-engage and consider issuing further guidance and feedback on this capability.

To evaluate this technology's impact on communities, Axon will work with its Community Advisory Coalition (CAC). Formed in 2021, the CAC brings together community leaders to share diverse perspectives and inform Axon's products and services.

The effort to detect and stop mass shooting events will require a wide range of partnerships to bring the best possible technology to bear. Companies interested in being considered as technology partners should email Partners@axon.com.

People or enterprises interested in receiving more information and updates as development progresses can email StopShootings@axon.com.

Rick Smith will also be hosting a Reddit AMA on Friday, June 3rd, 2022 at 1pm EST, to further discuss these ideas.

About Axon

Axon is a network of devices, apps and people that helps public safety personnel become smarter and safer. With a mission of protecting life, our technologies give customers the confidence, focus and time they need to

keep their communities safe. Our products impact every aspect of a public safety officer's day-to-day experience with the goal of helping everyone get home safe.

We work hard for those who put themselves in harm's way for all of us. To date, more than 267,000 lives and countless dollars have been saved with the Axon Network of devices, apps and people. Learn more at www.axon.com or by calling (800) 978-2737. Axon is a global company with headquarters in Scottsdale, Ariz. and global software engineering hub in Seattle, Wash., as well as additional offices in Australia, Canada, Finland, Vietnam, the UK and the Netherlands.

About Fusus

Fusus is the most widely used and trusted Real-Time Crime Center platform in U.S. Law Enforcement. The Fusus Platform is an open ecosystem that integrates and enhances all public safety and investigations assets. It can integrate with any data source, pull in public and private video feeds, enable video sources with artificial intelligence, integrate ALPR, body camera, drone and aircraft feeds, and do it all by utilizing and unifying existing equipment. The Fusus platform is affordable and scalable for agencies of every size and budget. It enables law enforcement and public safety personnel to function more efficiently and with improved operational intelligence, creating a common operating picture that emphasizes officer, citizen and community safety.

About DroneSense

Based in Austin, Texas, DroneSense offers a comprehensive solution that empowers organizations to build, manage, and scale unmanned aircraft programs. The company's mission-critical software platform enables users to leverage the full capabilities of drones in all operations. Drones powered by the DroneSense platform provide decision-quality data that expands situational awareness and acts as a force multiplier, ultimately leading to more lives saved and safer outcomes in public safety. To learn more about DroneSense, please visit www.dronesense.com.

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