

Academy of Model Aeronautics National Model Aircraft Safety Code

Effective January 1, 2014

A. **GENERAL:** A model aircraft is a non-human-carrying aircraft capable of sustained flight in the atmosphere. It may not exceed limitations of this code and is intended exclusively for sport, recreation, education and/or competition. All model flights must be conducted in accordance with this safety code and any additional rules specific to the flying site.

1. Model aircraft will not be flown:

- (a) In a careless or reckless manner.
- (b) At a location where model aircraft activities are prohibited.

2. Model aircraft pilots will:

- (a) Yield the right of way to all human-carrying aircraft.
- (b) See and avoid all aircraft and a spotter must be used when appropriate. (AMA Document #540-D.)
- (c) Not fly higher than approximately 400 feet above ground level within three (3) miles of an airport without notifying the airport operator.
- (d) Not interfere with operations and traffic patterns at any airport, heliport or seaplane base except where there is a mixed use agreement.
- (e) Not exceed a takeoff weight, including fuel, of 55 pounds unless in compliance with the AMA Large Model Airplane program. (AMA Document 520-A.)
- (f) Ensure the aircraft is identified with the name and address or AMA number of the owner on the inside or affixed to the outside of the model aircraft. (This does not apply to model aircraft flown indoors.)
- (g) Not operate aircraft with metal-blade propellers or with gaseous boosts except for helicopters operated under the provisions of AMA Document #555.
- (h) Not operate model aircraft while under the influence of alcohol or while using any drug that could adversely affect the pilot's ability to safely control the model.
- (i) Not operate model aircraft carrying pyrotechnic devices that explode or burn, or any device which propels a projectile or drops any object that creates a hazard to persons or property.

Exceptions:

- Free Flight fuses or devices that burn producing smoke and are securely attached to the model aircraft during flight.
- Rocket motors (using solid propellant) up to a G-series size may be used provided they remain attached to the model during flight. Model rockets may be flown in accordance with the National Model Rocketry Safety Code but may not be launched from model aircraft.
- Officially designated AMA Air Show Teams (AST) are authorized to use devices and practices as defined within the Team AMA Program Document. (AMA Document #718.)
- (j) Not operate a turbine-powered aircraft, unless in compliance with the AMA turbine regulations. (AMA Document #510-A.)

3. Model aircraft will not be flown in AMA sanctioned events, air shows or model demonstrations unless:

- (a) The aircraft, control system and pilot skills have successfully demonstrated all maneuvers intended or anticipated prior to the specific event.
- (b) An inexperienced pilot is assisted by an experienced pilot.

4. When and where required by rule, helmets must be properly worn and fastened. They must be OSHA, DOT, ANSI, SNELL or NOCSAE approved or comply with comparable standards.

B. RADIO CONTROL (RC)

1. All pilots shall avoid flying directly over unprotected people, vessels, vehicles or structures and shall avoid endangerment of life and property of others.
2. A successful radio equipment ground-range check in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations will be completed before the first flight of a new or repaired model aircraft.
3. At all flying sites a safety line(s) must be established in front of which all flying takes place. (AMA Document #706.)
 - (a) Only personnel associated with flying the model aircraft are allowed at or in front of the safety line.
 - (b) At air shows or demonstrations, a straight safety line must be established.
 - (c) An area away from the safety line must be maintained for spectators.
 - (d) Intentional flying behind the safety line is prohibited.

4. RC model aircraft must use the radio-control frequencies currently allowed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Only individuals properly licensed by the FCC are authorized to operate equipment on Amateur Band frequencies.
5. RC model aircraft will not knowingly operate within three (3) miles of any pre-existing flying site without a frequency-management agreement. (AMA Documents #922 and #923.)
6. With the exception of events flown under official AMA Competition Regulations, excluding takeoff and landing, no powered model may be flown outdoors closer than 25 feet to any individual, except for the pilot and the pilot's helper(s) located at the flight-line.
7. Under no circumstances may a pilot or other person touch an outdoor model aircraft in flight while it is still under power, except to divert it from striking an individual.
8. RC night flying requires a lighting system providing the pilot with a clear view of the model's attitude and orientation at all times. Hand-held illumination systems are inadequate for night flying operations.
9. The pilot of an RC model aircraft shall:
 - (a) Maintain control during the entire flight, maintaining visual contact without enhancement other than by corrective lenses prescribed for the pilot.
 - (b) Fly using the assistance of a camera or First-Person View (FPV) only in accordance with the procedures outlined in AMA Document #550.
 - (c) Fly using the assistance of autopilot or stabilization system only in accordance with the procedures outlined in AMA Document #560.

C. FREE FLIGHT

1. Must be at least 100 feet downwind of spectators and automobile parking when the model aircraft is launched.
2. Launch area must be clear of all individuals except mechanics, officials, and other fliers.
3. An effective device will be used to extinguish any fuse on the model aircraft after the fuse has completed its function.

D. CONTROL LINE

1. The complete control system (including the safety thong where applicable) must have an inspection and pull test prior to flying.
2. The pull test will be in accordance with the current Competition Regulations for the applicable model aircraft category.
3. Model aircraft not fitting a specific category shall use those pull-test requirements as indicated for Control Line Precision Aerobatics.
4. The flying area must be clear of all utility wires or poles and a model aircraft will not be flown closer than 50 feet to any above-ground electric utility lines.
5. The flying area must be clear of all nonessential participants and spectators before the engine is started.

Documents listed in AMA Safety Code:

AMA Document #510-A
AMA Document #520-A
AMA Document #540-D
AMA Document #550
AMA Document #555
AMA Document #560
AMA Document #706
AMA Document #718
AMA Document #922
AMA Document #923