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VERSION 1.2

# AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT


**Tools to advance GA safety and citizenship**

**Provided to the aviation community by:**

## *INTRODUCTION*

The AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT (Code of Conduct) offers recommendations designed to advance flight safety, airmanship, and the general aviation (GA) community.

The Code of Conduct is not a *standard* and is not intended to be implemented as one. Instead, the Code of Conduct presents a vision of excellence for aviators. Its principles complement and underscore legal requirements. There are also specialized versions of the Code of Conduct:

- AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT
- GLIDER AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT
- LIGHT SPORT AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT
- SEAPLANE PILOTS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT
- STUDENT PILOTS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

See *ADDITIONAL RESOURCES*, below.

***The Principles:***

The Code of Conduct has seven sections, each containing Principles and Sample Recommended Practices.

I. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF AVIATORS
II. PASSENGERS AND PEOPLE ON THE SURFACE
III. TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY
IV. SECURITY
V. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
VI. USE OF TECHNOLOGY
VII. ADVANCEMENT AND PROMOTION OF GENERAL AVIATION

***The Sample Recommended Practices:***

*Sample Recommended Practices* are basic suggestions for using the Code of Conduct principles and tailoring the principles to specific aviation communities and organizations. ***The Sample Recommended Practices may be modified to satisfy the unique capabilities and requirements of each pilot, mission, aircraft, and GA organization***. Some Sample Recommended Practices exceed the provisions of their associated Code of Conduct principles. They are not presented in any particular order, except that instrument flight rule (IFR)-specific Sample Recommended Practices generally appear last.

***The Commentary:***

Commentary on selected provisions of the Code of Conduct is published at <www.secureav.com>. The Commentary provides discussion, interpretive guidance, and suggested ways to adopt the Code of Conduct. Provisions of the Code of Conduct with published commentary are not necessarily more important than other provisions. Additional provisions will be added as the Commentary evolves.

***Benefits of the Code of Conduct:***

The Code of Conduct benefits pilots and the GA community by:

- highlighting important practices to make pilots better, safer aviators,
- promoting improved pilot training, better airmanship, appropriate pilot conduct, personal responsibility, and pilot contributions to the GA community and society at large,
- encouraging the development and adoption of good judgment and ethical behavior,
- advancing self-regulation through the GA community as an alternative to government regulation, and
- promoting GA and making flying a more rewarding experience.

*Note*: Not all flight operations are authorized in all jurisdictions. References to the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are used as examples. In other jurisdictions, applicable laws and regulations must be followed.

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## *AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT - PRINCIPLES*

### I. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF AVIATORS

**Pilots should:**

**a. make safety the number one priority,**

**b. seek excellence in airmanship,**

**c. develop and exercise good judgment, and apply sound principles of aeronautical decision-making,**

**d. recognize and manage risks effectively,**

**e. maintain situational awareness, and adhere to prudent operating practices and personal operating parameters (*e.g.*, minimums),**

**f. aspire to professionalism,**

**g. act with responsibility and courtesy, and**

**h. adhere to applicable laws and regulations.**

***Explanation:*** Code of Conduct Section I serves as a preamble to the Code of Conduct's other principles. It emphasizes safety, excellence, risk management, and responsibility.

***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- ❑ Approach flying with seriousness and diligence, recognizing that your life and the lives of your passengers and others depend on you.
- ❑ Recognize, accept, plan for, and do not underestimate the costs of implementing proper safety practices.
- ❑ Identify and adapt to changing flight conditions based on sound principles of airmanship and risk management. Be prepared to alter or abort your flight plan accordingly.
- ❑ Recognize the increased risks associated with flying in inclement weather, at night, in congested areas, over water, and over rugged, mountainous or forested terrain. Plan for and manage such risks prudently.
- ❑ Develop, use, periodically review, and refine personal checklists and personal minimums for all phases of flight. Review these materials regularly with a flight instructor or other trusted mentor.
- ❑ Make personal wellness and an honest self-evaluation of your fitness a precondition of each flight (for example, by using the *I'M SAFE* checklist – see, e.g., FAA AC 60-22).
- ❑ Establish conservative $O_2$ personal parameters—for example, daytime above 8,000 ft. MSL and nighttime above 5,000 ft. MSL. Consider use of a pulse oximeter. Use supplemental oxygen on flights when it may be beneficial.
- ❑ See and be seen. Practice techniques for seeing and avoiding other aircraft. Scan for traffic continuously. Enhance your visibility through appropriate use of lights and strobes.
- ❑ Listen and be heard. Monitor appropriate frequencies to remain aware of the location of other aircraft, and concisely inform other pilots of your position and intentions.
- ❑ Minimize turns and maneuvers below 500 feet AGL except as required during takeoff and landing.
- ❑ Comply with or exceed the requirements for mandatory inspections and Airworthiness Directives (ADs). Adhere to recommended inspections, service bulletins, and checklists.
- ❑ Plan every flight carefully. Calculate weight and balance, consider the effect of wind on fuel reserves and range, and consider diversion alternatives. Remain aware of deteriorating weather and other circumstances that may make continued flight unsafe.
- ❑ File a flight plan or communicate your intended flight itinerary to ground personnel prior to departure, even when flying locally.
- ❑ Adhere to applicable rules and operating practices of your flying club or school, your FBO, flight center, or aircraft rental provider.
- ❑ Operate rental aircraft as if you owned them. Communicate all discrepancies affirmatively and promptly.
- ❑ Develop and adhere to conservative personal operating parameters, such as the following personal minimums:
    - *Minimum descent altitude/decision height (MDA/DH)* – exercise extreme caution and voluntarily limit approaches where ceilings are less than 800 feet and visibility is less than 1 mile for straight-in approaches or ceilings are less than 1,000 feet and visibility is less than 3 miles for circling approaches. Never execute a circling approach at night unless there is no alternative and you are capable of safely executing such an approach. Use higher minimums in deteriorating weather conditions and at night.

- *Missed Approaches* – limit missed approaches to a maximum of two, and do not prematurely cancel IFR. Do not continue an unstable approach inside the Final Approach Fix in IMC—execute the missed approach procedure.
- *Departures* – plan for a takeoff alternative in case an emergency landing is required just after departure. If your departure airport is below landing minimums, your takeoff alternate should have a suitable instrument approach, with weather conditions above landing minimums.
- *Night Operations* – recognize the increased risks associated with night operations and fly IFR whenever practical at night (if rated, current, and proficient).

## II. PASSENGERS AND PEOPLE ON THE SURFACE

**Pilots should:**

**a. maintain passenger safety first and then reasonable passenger comfort,**

**b. manage risk and avoid unnecessary risk to passengers, to people and property on the surface, and to people in other aircraft,**

**c. brief passengers on planned flight procedures and inform them of any significant or unusual risk associated with the flight,**

**d. seek to prevent unsafe conduct by passengers, and**

**e. avoid operations that may alarm or disturb passengers or people on the surface.**

***Explanation*:** Pilots are responsible for the safety and comfort of their passengers. Passengers place their lives in pilots' hands, and pilots should exercise sufficient care on their behalf. Such care includes, but is not limited to, disclosing unusual risks, and exercising prudent risk management. Pilot responsibility also extends to people on the ground and in other aircraft.

***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- ❑ Keep your passengers as safe as possible, *as though they were your closest loved ones.*
- ❑ Aspire to act toward your passengers with professionalism.
- ❑ Plan and fly conservatively to improve safety margins.
- ❑ Tactfully disclose risks to each passenger and accept a prospective passenger's decision to refrain from participating.
- ❑ Require that passengers wear seat belts and shoulder harnesses, and consider providing hearing protection, such as intercom-equipped headsets.
- ❑ Provide a thorough passenger briefing prior to flight (see *ADDITIONAL RESOURCES* below).
- ❑ Determine the experience, background, and concerns of each passenger. Incorporate them into the preflight briefing and flight activities.
- ❑ If available, obtain favorable insurance coverage for passengers, and urge passengers to do so as well. Confirm that there are no misrepresentations on insurance applications,

and that you and any other pilot on the policy have complied with all policy provisions.

- ❑ Instruct passengers to avoid touching or obstructing critical flight controls. Brief and maintain a sterile cockpit for takeoff, landings, and other workload-intensive times.
- ❑ Encourage passengers to serve as safety resources – for example, by having them identify nearby aircraft, organize charts, and keep track of landmarks.
- ❑ Assess unfamiliar passengers for potential safety and security problems.
- ❑ Remember that passenger safety begins on the ramp before ever entering the aircraft. Watch passengers closely and keep them clear of ground-based hazards (e.g., fuel trucks, propellers, slippery surfaces).
- ❑ Avoid refueling aircraft with people on board.
- ❑ If practicable, fly precision approaches with vertical guidance (e.g., ILS) when carrying passengers.

## III. TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY

**Pilots should:**

**a. participate in training to maintain and improve proficiency beyond legal requirements,**

**b. participate in flight safety education programs,**

**c. remain vigilant and avoid complacency,**

**d. train to recognize and deal effectively with emergencies, and**

**e. accurately log hours flown and maneuvers practiced to satisfy training and currency requirements.**

***Explanation:*** Training and proficiency underlie aviation safety. Recurrent training is a primary component of proficiency and should include both air and ground training. Each contributes significantly to flight safety and neither can substitute for the other. Training sufficient to promote flight safety may well exceed what is required by law.

***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- ❑ Pursue a rigorous, lifelong course of aviation study.
- ❑ Use the manufacturer's flight manual to determine your aircraft's limitations, calculate performance, plan flights, properly secure cargo, determine fuel requirements, and calculate weight and balance.
- ❑ Follow and periodically review programs of study or series of training exercises to improve proficiency. Consider a training plan that will yield new ratings, certificates, and endorsements.
- ❑ Supplement stick-and-rudder training with scenario-based training to build decision-making and risk-management skills.
- ❑ Train for flight over challenging environments such as water or remote, desert, or mountainous terrain. Train for survival, and carry adequate survival equipment and drinking water.
- ❑ Understand and use appropriate procedures in the event of system malfunctions (e.g., electrical failure, lost communications, instrument problems).
- ❑ Achieve and maintain proficiency in the operation of avionics and automation.
- ❑ Know current aviation regulations and understand their implications and rationale.

- ❑ Understand and comply with the privileges and limitations of your pilot certificate.
- ❑ Attend aviation training programs offered by industry organizations and the FAA.
- ❑ Participate in the FAA Pilot Proficiency Program ("WINGS").
- ❑ Stay updated with diverse and relevant aviation publications.
- ❑ Develop a systematic approach to obtaining timely weather briefings and evaluating flight conditions.
- ❑ Conduct a periodic review of recent accidents and incidents, focusing on probable causes.
- ❑ Periodically demonstrate mastery of applicable practical test standards (PTS), and train to exceed PTS minimums.
- ❑ Obtain adequate training before flying an unfamiliar aircraft, even if you have flown that type in the past.
- ❑ Avoid practicing training maneuvers in busy airspace or over congested areas.
- ❑ Maintain currency that exceeds minimum regulatory requirements.
- ❑ Seek to fly at least once every two weeks. Make at least three night takeoffs and landings per month, or refrain from flying at night.
- ❑ Develop a practical understanding of the mechanics and systems of each aircraft you fly.
- ❑ Join a type club or support organization for the aircraft you fly to learn more about its safe operation, including capabilities and limitations.
- ❑ Consider maintaining a log to track errors and lessons learned on each flight.
- ❑ Register at <www.faasafety.gov> to receive announcements of safety meetings and literature, and review appropriate safety courses online.
- ❑ Complete the equivalent of a Flight Review annually, and, if instrument rated, complete an instrument proficiency check (IPC) every six months.
- ❑ Practice partial panel skills (if IFR-rated) at least every three months.

## IV. SECURITY

**Pilots should:**

**a. seek to maintain the security of all persons and property associated with their aviation activities,**

**b. remain vigilant and immediately report suspicious, reckless, or illegal activities,**

**c. secure aircraft to prevent unauthorized use, and**

**d. avoid special-use airspace except when approved or necessary in an emergency.**

***Explanation*:** Enhanced security awareness is essential for the aviation community. Threats to security demand responsive action. This Section addresses GA's role in promoting national security and preventing criminal acts.

***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- ❑ Check NOTAMS thoroughly during preflight preparation, and obtain updates during long flights, including NOTAMS for airspace restrictions.
- ❑ Always use a transponder with altitude encoding if equipped and operable unless otherwise authorized or directed by ATC.
- ❑ Use additional or enhanced locks or other anti-theft mechanisms to secure all aircraft.
- ❑ When carrying unfamiliar passengers, examine their carry-on bags for hazardous materials and weapons. Query familiar passengers regarding such materials.
- ❑ Confirm that ramp access gates are closed securely behind you to prevent "tailgating" by unauthorized persons.
- ❑ Become familiar with *Airport Watch* (866-GA-SECURE) and other means to report and deter suspicious activities.
- ❑ Periodically review military intercept procedures.
- ❑ Report security concerns, flight safety hazards or anomalies such as inoperative VORs and poor radio coverage to the appropriate authorities.
- ❑ Use ATC radar advisories when flying VFR whenever practicable.
- ❑ Do not deviate from an active flight plan (either IFR or VFR) or clearance without notifying ATC.
- ❑ Consider flying IFR (if rated) whenever practicable.

## V. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

**Pilots should:**

**a. recognize and seek to mitigate the environmental impact of aircraft operations,**

**b. minimize the discharge of fuel, oil, and other chemicals into the environment during refueling, preflight preparations, servicing, and flight operations,**

**c. avoid environmentally sensitive areas,**

**d. comply with applicable noise-abatement procedures and mitigate aircraft noise over noise-sensitive areas, and**

**e. review and adhere to prudent hazardous materials handling procedures.**

***Explanation:*** Reducing pollution caused by aviation will reduce health problems, environment impact, and unfavorable public perceptions of GA. Environmental issues can also close airports and increase regulatory burdens on GA.

***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- ❑ Use a Gasoline Analysis Test Separator (GATS) jar or other environmentally sound device/procedure for all fuel sampling. Return fuel samples to the fuel tanks or dispose of them properly.
- ❑ Learn and adopt environmentally responsible methods for all aspects of aircraft care, especially degreasing aircraft and handling run-off.
- ❑ Adhere to applicable noise abatement procedures provided safety is maintained.
- ❑ Be aware of the noise signature of your aircraft, and follow procedures to reduce noise such as reducing engine power and propeller RPM, as soon as practicable after takeoff.
- ❑ If practicable, fly well above noise-sensitive areas, or avoid them altogether.
- ❑ If practicable, install noise-reducing equipment such as quieter props and exhaust systems.
- ❑ Consider the impact of aircraft on wildlife, and conform to recommended practices (such as National Park Service minimum altitudes) when flying near wilderness and environmentally sensitive areas.
- ❑ Patronize service providers (such as FBOs, repair services, and aircraft cleaners) that adhere to environmentally friendly practices.

## VI. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

**Pilots should:**

**a. become familiar with and properly use appropriate affordable technologies,**

**b. monitor applicable airport advisory frequencies and report position concisely when approaching airports without an operating control tower and other higher-risk areas, if radio-equipped,**

**c. use transponders or other position-indicating technologies during in-flight operations, if available or otherwise directed by ATC, and use ATC radar advisories for VFR enroute operations, and**

**d. carry redundant transceivers and navigational equipment and use them in appropriate circumstances.**

***Explanation*:** Innovative, compact, and inexpensive technologies have greatly expanded the capabilities of GA aircraft. This Section encourages the use of such safety-enhancing technologies.

***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- ❑ When practicable, invest in new technologies that advance flight safety. Train to use them properly. Learn and understand the features and limitations of such technologies.
- ❑ Consider installing enhanced occupant restraints.
- ❑ Consider keeping a back-up communication/navigation device accessible during flight operations; include extra batteries or a back-up power supply. Consider use of a personal locator beacon.
- ❑ Inspect and maintain all avionics and flight instruments to keep them operational, current, and approved for the intended flight.
- ❑ Avoid programming navigation systems while taxiing (particularly during single-pilot operations).
- ❑ Recognize that programming avionics may cause distractions, and that distractions may lead to errors.
- ❑ Maintain basic flying and navigating skills to enhance safety in the event of failure or absence of advanced technologies or services.
- ❑ Avoid flying in or near Level 2 (moderate) or higher weather radar returns, especially when thunderstorms are present or forecast. Seek frequent ATC or AFSS weather updates.

- In IMC and at night, operate with an autopilot or a qualified second pilot if practicable.
- In IMC, operate with attitude-indicator (AI) system redundancy if practicable, and maintain partial-panel proficiency.

## VII. ADVANCEMENT AND PROMOTION OF GENERAL AVIATION

**Pilots should:**

**a. advance and promote general aviation safety and adherence to the Code of Conduct,**

**b. volunteer in and contribute to organizations that promote general aviation, and use their aviation skills to contribute to society at large,**

**c. demonstrate appreciation for aviation service providers,**

**d. advance a general aviation culture that values openness, humility, positive attitudes, and the pursuit of personal improvement, and**

**e. promote ethical behavior within the general aviation community.**

***Explanation*:** General aviation has a well-recognized and worsening public relations problem. Vigilance and responsive action are essential to ensure GA vitality and to enhance the GA experience for pilots and passengers.

***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- Strive to conform fully to the Code of Conduct.
- Serve as a *GA ambassador* to the public by providing accurate information and refuting misinformation concerning GA activities, and by encouraging potential student pilots.
- Recognize that your actions reflect upon the entire aviation community.
- Volunteer in support of general aviation.
- Make charitable use of your aviation resources (for example, by transporting persons seeking medical care or donating flight time to youth and environmental programs).
- Express appreciation to controllers and service personnel for their assistance and good service.
- Participate in aviation-related fundraising events.
- Invite *constructive* criticism from your fellow aviators and provide the same when asked.
- Adhere to the highest ethical principles in all aviation dealings, including business practices.
- Seek to resolve disputes informally and congenially.

### *ADDITIONAL RESOURCES*

- The AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT, the GLIDER AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT, the LIGHT SPORT AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT, the SEAPLANE PILOTS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT, and the STUDENT PILOTS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT are available at <www.secureav.com>.
- Resources to help [*insert your organization here*] advance pilot skills and promote flight safety are available at <www.[*your organization*].org/>.
- Further information about GA is available at:

  **FAA:** <www.faa.gov>, and <www.faasafety.gov>

  **AOPA:** <www.aopa.org/>

  **EAA:** <www.eaa.org>

  **NBAA:** <www.nbaa.org>
- Annotated *Commentary* helps implementers interpret the Code of Conduct and provides source materials and supplemental aides. Available at <www.secureav.com>.

**Abbreviations**

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| AD | Airworthiness Directive |
| AFSS | Automated Flight Service Station |
| AGL | Above Ground Level |
| ATC | Air Traffic Control |
| FAA | Federal Aviation Administration |
| FBO | Fixed Base Operator |
| GA | General Aviation |
| IFR | Instrument Flight Rules |
| ILS | Instrument Landing System |
| IMC | Instrument Meteorological Conditions |
| IPC | Instrument Proficiency Check |
| MDA/DH | Min. Descent Altitude/Decision Height |
| MSL | Mean Sea Level |
| PTS | Practical Test Standards |
| VFR | Visual Flight Rules |
| VMC | Visual Meteorological Conditions |

### *NOTICE*



Pilots and the aviation community may use the AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT as a resource for code of conduct development, although it is recommended that this be supported by independent research on the suitability of its principles for specific or local applications and situations. It is not intended to provide legal advice and must not be relied upon as such.

### *EDITS, ERRATA, COMMENTS*

The AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT is a living document, intended to be updated periodically to reflect changes in aviation practices and the aviation environment. Please send your suggestions, edits, errata, questions and comments to: <PEB@secureav.com>.

### *ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

The AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT has had the benefit of extensive editorial comment and suggestions by a diverse body of the GA community, and beyond. *See* "ACKNOWLEDGMENTS" at <http://www.secureav.com/ack.pdf>. The Permanent Editorial Board of the Code of Conduct is presented at <http://secureav.com/PEB.pdf>.

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