Pilots

AVIATORS' MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

Recommended voluntary practices to advance flight safety, airmanship, and the general aviation community

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INTRODUCTION

The Aviators' Model Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct) presents broad guidance and recommendations for General Aviation (GA) pilots to improve airmanship, flight safety, and to sustain and improve the GA community.

The Code of Conduct presents a vision of excellence in GA aviation. Its principles both complement and supplement what is merely legal. The Code of Conduct is not a "standard" and is not intended to be implemented as such.

THE PRINCIPLES:

The Code of Conduct consists of the following seven sections (each containing principles and sample recommended practices).

1. **General Responsibilities of Aviators**
2. **Passengers and People on the Surface**
3. **Training and Proficiency**
4. **Security**
5. **Environmental Issues**
6. **Use of Technology**
7. **Advancement and Promotion of General Aviation**

THE SAMPLE RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

To further the effective use of the Code of Conduct's principles, *Sample Recommended Practices* offer examples of ways pilots might integrate the principles into their own practices. The Sample Recommended Practices (which encourage selected *personal minimums*) can help GA pilots and organizations develop practices uniquely suited to their own activities and situations. Unlike the Code of Conduct principles themselves, ***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 do in fact exceed the stringency 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 appear last.

Note: Not all flight operations are authorized in all jurisdictions. References to government entities (such as the FAA) are contextual and there may be other applicable entities in other jurisdictions.

BENEFITS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT:

The Code of Conduct may benefit pilots and the GA community by:

- highlighting important practices that will help pilots become better, safer aviators,
- addressing individual pilot's roles within the larger GA community, by examining issues such as improved pilot training, better airmanship, desired pilot conduct, personal responsibility, and pilot's contributions to the GA community and society at large,
- encouraging the development and adoption of ethical guidelines,
- advancing self-regulation by the GA community instead of burdensome government regulation, and
- promoting GA and making flying a more rewarding experience.

AVIATORS'
MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT - PRINCIPLES

I. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF AVIATORS

Pilots should:

a. make safety their number one priority,
b. seek excellence in airmanship,
c. develop and exercise good judgment,
d. recognize and manage risks effectively,
e. 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 and umbrella for the Code of Conduct's other principles. It emphasizes safety, excellence, risk management, responsibility, and lays the foundation for accountability and heightened diligence.*

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Approach flying with the utmost seriousness and diligence, recognizing that your life and the lives of your passengers and others depend on you.
- Recognize, accept and plan for the costs of implementing proper safety practices (often greater than expected).
- Identify prevailing conditions and adapt to changing in-flight conditions based on sound principles of airmanship and risk management.
- Recognize the increased risks associated with flying in inclement weather, at night, over water, and over rugged, mountainous or forested terrain. Take steps to manage those risks effectively and prudently without exceeding personal parameters (*see* Code of Conduct I.e.).
- Develop, use, periodically review and refine personal checklists and personal minimums for all phases of flight operations. Seek the input and review of these materials by a certificated flight instructor.
- Commit to making personal wellness a precondition of flying (for example, by using the *I'M SAFE* checklist before each flight).
- Know your personal susceptibility to hypoxia (for example, via oxymeter); carry supplemental oxygen on flights where its use may benefit you or your passengers; and establish O_2 personal minimums - for example, daytime above 8,000 ft. MSL and nighttime above 5,000 ft. MSL.

- See and be seen. Employ techniques for seeing other aircraft, such as scanning, and techniques to enhance your own visibility to avoid other aircraft, such as the use of radio, lights, and strobes (except while taxiing or in instrument meteorological conditions (IMC)).
- Minimize turns and maneuvers below 500 feet AGL (except as required for landings and obstacle departure procedures).
- Comply with or exceed the requirements for mandatory inspections and Airworthiness Directives (ADs), and voluntarily adhere to manufacturers' recommended inspections, service bulletins, and checklists.
- For cross-country operations, identify alternate landing sites and available fuel along the planned route prior to departure in case deteriorating weather or other emergency circumstances make continued flight unsafe.
- Adhere to applicable flying club/school and FBO/flight center rules and operating practices.
- Develop and adhere to personal conservative 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 under 800 ft. AGL and visibility is under 1 mi. for straight-in approaches or ceilings are under 1,000 ft. AGL and visibility is under 3 mi. 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. In deteriorating weather conditions and at night, observe higher minimums.
  - Approaches - limit approaches to a maximum of two (under the same or deteriorating weather conditions) and do not prematurely cancel IFR. In an unstable approach inside the Final Approach Fix in IMC, execute the missed approach procedure.
  - Departures - select a "departure alternate" landing site (for emergency landing just after departure), and depart only in conditions above applicable arrival or departure minimums (unless a nearby airport has an available ILS).
  - Night operations - recognize the increased risks associated with night operations and fly IFR whenever practical at night (if rated and proficient).

II. PASSENGERS AND PEOPLE ON THE SURFACE

Pilots should:

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

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

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

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

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

* ***Explanation:*** *You are solely responsible for the safety and comfort of your 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.
- Seek to improve safety margins, and always act conservatively to maintain flight safety.
- 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 the use of headsets (or ear plugs) during flight operations.
- Provide an instructive passenger briefing in advance of the anticipated flight.
- Determine the applicable experience, background and concerns of each passenger and incorporate them into the preflight briefing and flight activities.
- Become familiar with, and if feasible, consider obtaining favorable insurance coverage for passengers, and urge passengers to do so too.
- Instruct passengers to avoid touching or obstructing critical flight controls.
- Encourage passengers to serve as safety resources - for example, by having them identify nearby aircraft, organize charts, and keep track of landmarks.

- Screen unfamiliar passengers for safety and security purposes.
- If practicable, favor precision approaches over non-precision approaches when carrying passengers.

III. TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY

Pilots should:

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

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

c. **act with vigilance 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 major component of flight safety. Such training includes 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, life-long course of aviation study.
- Follow and periodically review programs of study or series of training exercises to improve proficiency. Adhere to a training plan that will yield new ratings, certificates and endorsements-or at the very least, greater flight proficiency.
- Train for flight in unique environments such as over water, remote or desert, and mountainous terrain. Train for survival and carry adequate survival equipment.
- Know your aircraft's performance limitations, how to plan flights and determine fuel requirements.
- Understand and use appropriate procedures in the event radio communications are lost.
- Achieve and maintain proficiency in the efficient and functional operation of technology-intensive aviation equipment.

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- Know current aviation regulations and understand their implications and rationale. Spend time each month reviewing the aviation regulations.
- Understand and comply with the privileges and limitations of your pilot certificate.
- Attend aviation training programs offered by industry organizations or the FAA.
- Participate in the FAA Pilot Proficiency Award Program ("Wings").
- Keep up to date with diverse and relevant aviation publications.
- Study and develop a practical knowledge of aviation weather.
- Each month, review reports of recent or nearby accidents or incidents, focusing on contributing factors.
- Demonstrate conformance to applicable FAA practical test standards (PTS) periodically, and complete additional training as necessary to exceed those minimum standards.
- Before attempting a cross-country flight or carrying passengers in an unfamiliar aircraft, complete at least one training flight in that unfamiliar aircraft model, and discern differences among similar aircraft (that is, same make and model but varying tail numbers).
- Avoid practicing training maneuvers near highly populated areas.
- Seek to fly at least once every two weeks and at least one night a month, to include at least three night take-offs and landings, or else refrain from flying at night.
- Develop a practical understanding of the mechanics and systems of each aircraft you fly.
- Join a "type club" appropriate to the aircraft you fly to learn more about it (for example, the American Bonanza Society, Cessna Pilots Association, Cirrus Owners and Pilots Association, Diamond Aircraft Pilots and Owners Organization, the Malibu Mirage Owners and Pilots Association, the Piper Owners Society, or other aircraft-specific club).
- Complete the equivalent of a Flight Review annually rather than every two years and, if instrument rated, an instrument proficiency check (IPC) every six months.
- Maintain currency including for day, night, and IFR operations that exceeds minimum regulatory requirements.
- Register at **www.faasafety.gov** for safety meeting announcements and safety literature.

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 their aircraft to prevent unauthorized use, and

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

* ***Explanation:*** *This Section addresses preventing criminal acts and promoting national security. The tragic events of 9/11 have had a profound impact on aviation and have created demands for responsive action. Enhanced security awareness by aviators is a stark new reality for the GA community. Accordingly, this section responds proactively to various new threats and vulnerabilities.*

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Check thoroughly for temporary flight restrictions (TFRs) before *every* flight and in-flight during long flights.
- Use a transponder (with altitude encoding) whenever authorized.
- Use additional or enhanced locks or other anti-theft mechanisms to secure all aircraft.
- When carrying passengers who are not well known to the pilot, examine passenger carry-on bags for dangerous materials.
- Confirm that ramp access gates are closed securely behind you to prevent "tailgating" by unauthorized persons.
- Become familiar with *Airport Watch* (+1-866-GA-SECURE) and other means to report and deter suspicious activities.
- Report flight safety hazards or anomalies (such as inoperative VORs and poor radio coverage) and security concerns to the appropriate authorities.
- Use VFR "flight following" (in Europe, "Flight Information Service") when practicable.
- Avoid deviating from an active flight plan (both IFR and VFR) or from a clearance without notifying ATC.
- Consider flying IFR (if rated) whenever practicable.

Check for TFRs before every flight and in-flight during long flights.

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, particularly during refueling, preflight preparations, and servicing,**

c. **avoid environmentally sensitive areas, and**

d. **mitigate aircraft noise in populated or other noise-sensitive areas and comply with applicable noise-abatement procedures.**

* ***Explanation:*** *Mitigation of pollution caused by aviation activities is important both to the general public, to minimize harm to the environment, and to the GA community, to avoid unfavorable public perceptions. Indeed, environmental issues such as noise pollution can close airports and otherwise jeopardize GA. Other environmental impacts of GA have garnered less attention but nevertheless deserve emphasis.*

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Use a Gasoline Analysis Test Separator (GATS) jar for all fuel sampling and 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.
- Learn relevant applicable local noise abatement procedures and adhere to them whenever it is safe to do so.
- 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.
- Conform to recommended practices (such as those of the National Park Service) when flying near wilderness and environmentally sensitive areas. Consider the impact of aircraft on wildlife and people on the surface.
- Patronize service providers (such as FBOs, repair services and aircraft cleaners) that adhere to environmentally friendly practices.

Learn relevant applicable local noise abatement procedures.

VI. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Pilots should:

a. **become familiar with and properly use appropriate available cost-effective technologies,**

b. **monitor applicable airport advisory frequencies and report position when approaching non-towered or unattended airports and other higher-risk areas,**

c. **use transponders or next-generation position-indicating technologies during in-flight operations unless otherwise authorized by ATC, inoperable, or not equipped, and use ATC "flight following" for VFR enroute operations, and**

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

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

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Use radios and transponders consistently, except when not authorized.
- When practicable, invest in new technologies that advance flight safety, and train to use them properly. Learn and understand the features and limitations of such technologies.
- Keep a back-up (portable or permanently installed) radio/navigation aid accessible (including extra batteries or a back-up power supply) during all flight operations.
- Maintain all avionics and flight instruments to keep them operational, current and approved for the intended flight.
- Recognize that programming navigation systems in flight may distract pilots from other pilot duties and increase programming errors.
- Avoid programming navigation systems while taxiing (for single-pilot operations).
- Maintain competency and proficiency in "conventional" flight planning and operations to enhance flight safety in the event of the failure or unavailability of advanced technologies or services.
- Whenever practicable, avoid flying in or near level 2 (or higher) weather radar returns, especially when convection is present or expected.
- In IMC and at night, operate with an operational autopilot or a qualified second pilot if possible.
- In IMC, operate with attitude-indicator (AI) system redundancy if practicable and maintain partial-panel proficiency.

VII. ADVANCEMENT & 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 GA community.**

* ***Explanation:*** *General aviation has a well-recognized (and undeserved) public relations problem that is, in many respects, worsening. Vigilance and responsive action by the GA community are essential to ensure GA vitality and to enhance the GA experience for both you and for others.*

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.
- 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 fund-raising 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.

Adhere to the highest ethical principles in all aviation dealings, including business practices.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The AVIATORS' MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT is available at **www.secureav.com**.

Additional resources to help adopting pilots in advance pilot skills and promote flight safety are available at **www.avemco.com/briefingroom/briefingroom.asp** and at **www.faasafety.gov**.

A Sample Passenger Briefing is available to help aviators compose and deliver consistent, comprehensive passenger briefings. Use of the Briefing can improve passenger safety and comfort, provide evidence that pilots have fulfilled (indeed, surpassed) minimum disclosure requirements, and help manage pilot liability. Available at **www.secureav.com**.

An Annotated Commentary helps aviators interpret the AVIATORS' MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT and provides source materials and supplemental aides. Available at **www.secureav.com**.

NOTICE

This Model Code of Conduct is a customized version of the Aviators' Model Code of Conduct created by Michael S. Baum. This initiative has had the benefit of extensive editorial comment and suggestions by a diverse body of the GA community, and beyond. See "Acknowledgements " at www.secure.com. Special thanks to Jim Lauerman, Executive Vice President, Avemco for advancing the Aviator's Model Code of Conduct.

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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.**

ABBREVIATIONS

AD:	Airworthiness Directive
AGL:	Above Ground Level
ATC:	Air Traffic Control
FAA:	Federal Aviation Administration
FBO:	Fixed Base Operator
GA:	General Aviation
IFR:	Instrument Flight Rules
IMC:	Instrument Meteorological Conditions
IPC:	Instrument Proficiency Check
MDA/DH:	Min. Descent Altitude/Decision Height
PTS:	Practical Test Standards
TFR:	Temporary Flight Restrictions
VFR:	Visual Flight Rules
VMC:	Visual Meteorological Conditions

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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 **www.secureav.com**. The Permanent Editorial Board of the Code of Conduct is presented at **www.secureav.com/PEB.pdf**.