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AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT**

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Dear Flight Instructor:

This letter introduces the **Flight Instructors Model Code of Conduct (FIMCC)**. Developed by a team of aviation professionals and drawing upon decades of research and experience, the Code recommends operating practices to improve the quality of your instruction and the safety of your operation.

Flight instructors serve as role models for the entire aviation community. The FIMCC can be a valuable tool for flight instructors at all levels—light sport or instrument, large flight schools or independent operators. Your fellow pilots look to you as an expert; the manner in which you teach and the example you set impact the safety culture of aviation.

A professional code can help you achieve new levels of proficiency. The FIMCC is just such a tool, a set of guidelines that is adaptable to your needs. It can build and enhance not only the perception, but the reality of the instructor-student relationship as that of respected professional and client. We encourage you to adopt it.

The FIMCC was developed as a volunteer effort and is provided without charge as a public service. The Code and supporting materials can be found online at secureav.com.

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VERSION 1.0

FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT



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**Tools to Advance Flight
and Ground Instructor
Safety and Professionalism**

**Provided to the Aviation Instructor
Community by:**

[Insert Sponsoring Entity]

INTRODUCTION

The FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT (Code of Conduct) offers recommendations to advance safety and professionalism in both ground and flight instruction. The Code of Conduct presents a vision of excellence for flight and ground instructors. Its principles complement and underscore legal requirements.

The Code of Conduct is a [model](#), not a standard. Users should customize or otherwise revise the document—including [title](#), [length](#), and [organization](#)—to fit their needs. See “Additional Resources” (below) for materials to help facilitate such customization.

The Code of Conduct will be most effective if users have a firm grasp of the fundamentals of flight as well as a commitment to achieving professionalism as educators. It is intended to assist in teaching the core principles that help aviators build a foundation of flight safety, proficiency, and wisdom.

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

The Sections:

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

The Sample Recommended Practices:

Sample Recommended Practices are suggestions for applying the principles of the Code of Conduct and tailoring them to individual instructors and organizations. ***Sample Recommended Practices may be reordered, modified or eliminated to satisfy the unique capabilities and requirements of each instructor, mission, aircraft, organization, and flight environment.*** Some Sample Recommended Practices exceed the provisions of the associated Code of Conduct principles. They are not presented in any order of importance, 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. Published commentary on any provision does not imply greater importance of that provision. Additional provisions will be added as the Commentary evolves.

Benefits of the Code of Conduct:

The Code of Conduct benefits instructors and the aviation community by:

- ❑ highlighting practices to support professionalism and safety among instructors,
- ❑ promoting improved pilot training, airmanship, conduct, personal responsibility, and instructor contributions to the aviation community and society at large,
- ❑ encouraging the development and adoption of good judgment and ethical behavior,
- ❑ advancing self-regulation through the aviation community as an alternative to government regulation,
- ❑ supporting improved communications between instructors, students, regulators, and others in the aviation industry, and
- ❑ promoting recognition of instruction as a highly respected and rewarding profession.

To achieve these benefits, instructors should embrace the precepts of the Code of Conduct and promote them to their students.

Note: References to the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are used as examples. In all jurisdictions, applicable laws and regulations must be followed.

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FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

I. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF INSTRUCTORS

Instructors should:

- a. **make safety a high priority,**
- b. **seek excellence in airmanship,**
- c. **develop, exercise, and teach good judgment, and aeronautical decision-making,**
- d. **recognize and manage risks effectively, and teach sound principles of risk management,**
- e. **demonstrate and teach situational awareness, 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: These General Responsibilities serve as a preamble to the Code of Conduct's other principles. They emphasize safety, excellence, risk management, and responsibility.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- ❑ Approach flight instruction with seriousness and diligence, recognizing that your life and the lives of your students, their passengers, and others depend on you.
- ❑ Recognize that instructor conduct reflects upon the entire aviation community.
- ❑ Understand and comply with the privileges and limitations of your certificates, licenses, and additional ratings, and ensure any endorsements are correct and current. Consider a training plan that will yield new certificates, licenses, ratings, and endorsements.
- ❑ In addition to instructor certificate renewal, complete an instrument proficiency check (IPC) or the equivalent every six months.
- ❑ Teach situational awareness based on sound principles of airmanship, scenario-based instruction, and risk management.

- ❑ Recognize, accept, and plan for costs of implementing proper safety practices.
- ❑ Within the scope of your education, training, and authority apply a Safety Management Systems (SMS) approach to safety considering equipment, facilities, environment, mission, organization, and human factors.
- ❑ Review flight instructor methods and techniques with a trusted flight instructor-mentor during flight reviews or more frequently.
- ❑ Develop and teach Crew Resource Management (CRM), and Single Pilot Resource Management (SRM) techniques.
- ❑ Teach the increased risks associated with flying at low altitude, in inclement weather, at night, in congested areas, over water, and over rugged, mountainous or forested terrain.
- ❑ Never subject others to risks you would not prudently take, plan your lessons accordingly, and communicate your reasoning.
- ❑ Develop, use, periodically review, and refine personal checklists and personal minimums for all phases of flight and instruction. Review these materials regularly with an experienced instructor or other trusted mentor.
- ❑ See and be seen. Demonstrate techniques for seeing and avoiding other aircraft. Do not practice maneuvers in congested airspace. Enhance your visibility through appropriate use of lights and strobes.
- ❑ Listen and be heard. Monitor appropriate frequencies to remain aware of other aircraft, and accurately inform other pilots of your position and intentions.
- ❑ Monitor and report. Address safety and compliance issues.
- ❑ Teach and maintain a sterile cockpit for taxi, takeoff, landing, and other critical phases of flight.
- ❑ Minimize turns and maneuvers below 500 feet AGL except as required during takeoff and landing.
- ❑ Never allow simulated emergencies to become actual emergencies.
- ❑ File a flight plan or communicate your intended flight itinerary/lesson to ground personnel prior to departure, even when flying locally.
- ❑ Be aware of personal susceptibility to (and seek to avoid or manage) distraction, fatigue, stress, and hazardous attitudes.

- ❑ Make personal wellness and an honest evaluation of your and your student’s mental and physical fitness a precondition of each flight—for example, by using the *I’M SAFE* (Illness, Medication, Stress, Alcohol, Fatigue, Emotion) checklist.
- ❑ Recognize that poor personal hygiene may diminish an instructor’s effectiveness and professionalism.
- ❑ Establish conservative personal parameters for the use of supplemental oxygen, and an awareness of your personal susceptibility to hypoxia. Consider use of a pulse oximeter. Use supplemental oxygen on flights when it may be beneficial.
- ❑ Demonstrate adherence to applicable rules and operating practices of your airport, flying club or school, FBO, flight center, or aircraft rental provider.
- ❑ Teach airworthiness and maintenance responsibilities and limitations for both owners and renters. Stress owner/operator compliance with Airworthiness Directives (ADs) and the benefits of complying with recommended inspections and Service Bulletins (SBs).
- ❑ Teach students to operate rental aircraft as if they owned them, and to communicate all discrepancies effectively and promptly.
- ❑ Refuse to use an aircraft that has unsafe maintenance write-ups or is otherwise not airworthy.
- ❑ Return aircraft in an equal or better state of cleanliness than received.
- ❑ Encourage students to develop conservative personal operating parameters reflecting their experience, proficiency, and currency in challenging conditions, including poor weather and night operations.
- ❑ Avoid sexual relationships with your students and sexual harassment in your workplace.

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II. STUDENTS, PASSENGERS, AND PEOPLE ON THE SURFACE

Instructors should:

- a. **maintain student and passenger safety first, and then reasonable student and passenger comfort,**
- b. **manage risk and avoid unnecessary risk to students, passengers, people and property on the surface, and people in other aircraft,**
- c. **brief and debrief students on planned flight lessons and inform them of any significant or unusual risk associated with the flight,**
- d. **seek to prevent unsafe conduct by students and passengers, and**
- e. **avoid operations that may alarm, disturb, or endanger students, passengers or people on the surface.**

Explanation: Instructors are responsible for the safety, comfort, and progress of their students. Students and passengers place their lives in flight instructors’ hands, and flight instructors should exercise sufficient care on their behalf. Such care includes, but is not limited to, disclosing unusual risks and exercising prudent risk management. Instructor responsibility also extends to passengers, people on the ground, and in other aircraft.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- ❑ Set the highest examples of professionalism as a pilot and instructor.
- ❑ Teach students to improve safety margins by planning and flying conservatively.
- ❑ Tactfully disclose risks to students and address their concerns or anxieties regarding operations or maneuvers.
- ❑ Teach and conduct a passenger safety briefing for every flight (see Additional Resources below).
- ❑ Remember that student safety begins in the preflight briefing and on the ramp before entering the aircraft. Monitor students closely and keep them clear of ground-based hazards (e.g., fuel trucks, propellers, engine thrust/blast, tools, slippery surfaces).

- ❑ Be aware of a student's attention span, workload, and level of fatigue, and tailor instruction accordingly.
- ❑ Determine the experience, background, and concerns of your students. Incorporate this knowledge into your lessons.
- ❑ Offer mentoring to students after completion of training.
- ❑ Teach safety considerations for refueling aircraft with and without passengers onboard, as appropriate.
- ❑ Obtain flight instructor insurance coverage, and make sure that your students are also insured. Comply with all policy provisions.

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III. TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY

Instructors should:

- a. **participate in regular recurrent training to maintain and improve instructor 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,**
- e. **plan every lesson carefully,**
- f. **follow a training syllabus and ensure students are progressing, and**
- g. **maintain an accurate log to satisfy training, currency requirements, endorsements given, and maneuvers practiced, for both instructor and student.**

Explanation: Training and proficiency underlie aviation safety for both instructor and student. 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 to promote flight safety must often exceed legal requirements.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- ❑ Develop and follow a training regimen that incorporates the assessment of student progress and ensures the assessment is communicated to the student and includes the student's input.
- ❑ Pursue a rigorous, lifelong course of aviation study. Become familiar with theories of effective teaching and training.
- ❑ Consider the pursuit of advanced teaching credentials and professional certifications.
- ❑ Embrace and accommodate varying student learning styles. Seek feedback from students and refine your teaching accordingly.
- ❑ Teach appropriate use of the aircraft flight manual.
- ❑ Teach students to understand and appreciate their roles and responsibilities as pilot in

- command, including declaring an emergency when appropriate.
- ❑ Help student develop decision-making and risk-management skills at all levels of training. Integrate stick-and-rudder and scenario-based training.
 - ❑ Expand your instruction to include challenging environments such as water, remote, desert, or mountainous terrain, emphasizing effective risk management.
 - ❑ Train for survival, and carry adequate survival equipment, apparel, and drinking water.
 - ❑ Understand and teach the unique risks and need for vigilance in taxi and runway operations.
 - ❑ Develop and teach a practical understanding of the mechanics and systems of each aircraft you fly.
 - ❑ Achieve and maintain proficiency in the operation of avionics and automation. Instruct your students to do the same.
 - ❑ Understand, teach, and use appropriate procedures in the event of system malfunctions (e.g., electrical failure, lost communications, and instrument problems).
 - ❑ Obtain adequate training before instructing in an unfamiliar aircraft, or with unfamiliar systems, even if you have flown that type in the past.
 - ❑ Join type clubs or support organizations for your training aircraft to learn more about their safe operation, including capabilities and limitations.
 - ❑ Learn, review, and teach current aviation regulations and understand their implications and rationale.
 - ❑ Stay current with diverse and relevant aviation publications.
 - ❑ Develop and teach a systematic approach to obtaining timely weather briefings and evaluating flight conditions.
 - ❑ Incorporate a periodic review of recent accidents and incidents, including local trends, into your training regime, focusing on probable causes.
 - ❑ Teach and demonstrate mastery of applicable written and flight test standards, and train to exceed applicable test minimums. Maintain currency that exceeds minimum regulatory requirements and professional standards.
 - ❑ Teach and demonstrate mastery of airspace categories and classes, their limitations, and methods to prevent inadvertent pilot deviations.
 - ❑ Avoid practicing training maneuvers in busy airspace or over congested areas.
 - ❑ Fly often enough to maintain proficiency and currency in day, night, VFR, and IFR conditions.
 - ❑ Maintain a log to track errors and lessons learned on each flight. Teach your students to do the same.
 - ❑ Advise students of estimated cost and time, obtain their express consent to such fees and time prior to commencing instruction, and seek effective teaching solutions consistent with regulations and safety. Advise students if actual costs vary from the estimate, and obtain approval before proceeding.

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IV. SECURITY

Instructors 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. become familiar with the latest security regulations, and
- d. avoid special-use airspace except when approved or necessary in an emergency.

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

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Teach students to check NOTAMS thoroughly during preflight preparation, and obtain updates during long flights, with emphasis on NOTAMS for airspace restrictions.
- Periodically review military intercept procedures. Monitor 121.5 MHz when practicable.
- Always use a transponder with altitude encoding if equipped and operable unless otherwise authorized or directed by ATC.
- Report suspicious behavior and other security concerns to the appropriate authorities.
- Do not deviate from an active flight plan (IFR or VFR) or clearance without notifying the appropriate air traffic facility.
- To help avoid special use airspace, use ATC radar advisories when conducting VFR training flights, or consider flying IFR (if rated and equipped), whenever practicable.
- Secure all unattended aircraft. Use additional or enhanced locks or other anti-theft mechanisms to secure all aircraft, as appropriate.
- Teach students to query passengers regarding hazardous materials and weapons in their luggage or on their person.

- Confirm that ramp access gates are closed securely behind you to prevent "tailgating" by unauthorized persons.
- Teach students to challenge and report irregularities, including unauthorized or suspicious people.
- Become familiar with the means to report and deter suspicious activities, such as AOPA's *Airport Watch* (866-GA-SECURE / 866-427-3287).
- Complete required security training.

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V. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Instructors should:

- a. teach 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, ground servicing, and flight operations,**
- c. respect and protect environmentally sensitive areas, and set such examples for students,**
- d. comply with and teach applicable noise-abatement procedures and mitigate aircraft noise near noise-sensitive areas, and**
- e. review and adhere to prudent hazardous materials handling procedures.**

Explanation: Environmental issues can close airports, hamper operations, and increase regulatory burdens. Reducing pollution caused by aviation will reduce health problems, environment impact, and unfavorable public perceptions.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Adopt and teach environmentally sound and legally compliant procedures for fuel sampling, defueling, and disposing of fuel samples.
- Learn, adopt, and teach environmentally sound and compliant methods for all aspects of aircraft care, especially degreasing, de-icing, 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/or propeller RPM, as soon as practicable after takeoff.
- If practicable, fly well above or avoid noise-sensitive areas.
- Teach owners/operators the benefits of installing noise-reducing equipment such as quieter props and exhaust systems, if practicable.
- Consider the impact of aircraft on wildlife, and conform to recommended practices (such as National Park Service minimum altitudes) when

flying near wilderness and other environmentally sensitive areas.

- Patronize service providers (such as FBOs, repair services, and aircraft cleaners) that adhere to environmentally friendly practices.

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VI. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Instructors should:

- a. become familiar with, properly use, and teach appropriate technologies,
- b. teach students to monitor applicable airport advisory frequencies and report position accurately 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 training flights, if available or otherwise directed by ATC, and use ATC radar advisories for VFR enroute operations,
- d. carry redundant transceivers and navigational equipment and use them in appropriate circumstances, and
- e. use flight simulators and training devices as available and appropriate.

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

Sample Recommended Practices:

- ❑ When practicable, invest in new technologies that advance flight safety and aviation education. Learn and understand the features and limitations of such technologies and teach their proper use.
- ❑ Consider keeping back-up and redundant communication/navigation devices accessible during flight operations, including extra batteries or a back-up power supply. Consider use of a personal locator beacon.
- ❑ Inspect and maintain avionics and flight instruments to keep them operational, current, and approved for the intended flight.
- ❑ Report inoperative navigation aids and areas of poor radio coverage to the appropriate authority.
- ❑ Teach proper management of autoflight systems. Demonstrate that programming avionics may cause distractions, and that distractions may lead to errors, particularly during taxi and other critical phases of flight.

- ❑ Teach basic flying and navigating skills to enhance safety in the event of failure or absence of advanced instrument displays or automation. Teach realistic scenarios for recovery from instrument failure in IMC.
- ❑ Teach students to avoid flying in or near moderate or higher weather radar returns, especially when thunderstorms are present or forecast. Seek frequent ATC or AFSS weather updates.
- ❑ Train students to operate with an autopilot or a qualified second pilot if practicable when flying in IMC and/or at night.
- ❑ Train students to operate with attitude-indicator (AI) system redundancy if practicable, and maintain partial-panel proficiency in IMC.
- ❑ Consider the use of flight tracking or flight data monitoring technologies.
- ❑ Use flight simulators, training devices, or web-based tools as appropriate, even when their use precludes in-flight instruction.

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VII. ADVANCEMENT AND PROMOTION OF AVIATION INSTRUCTION

Instructors should:

- a. advance and promote aviation safety and adherence to the Code of Conduct,**
- b. volunteer in and contribute to organizations that promote aviation and airports, and should use their skills to contribute to society at large—and encourage their students to do so too,**
- c. demonstrate appreciation for other aviation professionals and service providers,**
- d. advance a training culture that values openness, humility, integrity, positive attitudes, and the pursuit of personal improvement,**
- e. promote ethical behavior within the aviation community, and**
- f. mentor new and future instructors.**

Explanation: Vigilance and positive responsive action are essential to ensure industry vitality and to enhance the aviation instruction community.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- ❑ Strive to adopt the Code of Conduct.
- ❑ Serve as an *aviation ambassador* to your students and to the public by providing accurate information and refuting misinformation concerning aviation activities, and by encouraging potential student pilots.
- ❑ Contribute articles or papers to aviation journals or other media.
- ❑ Join and participate in a professional organization of instructors.
- ❑ Attend and contribute to training programs offered by government or industry, for example, the FAA Pilot Proficiency Program (“WINGS”).
- ❑ Register at <www.faa.gov> to receive announcements of safety meetings, literature, and to review appropriate safety courses. Encourage your students to do so too.
- ❑ Volunteer in support of the aviation industry such as with youth groups and “career days” to share your flight instruction expertise and enthusiasm and recruit new students.

- ❑ Make charitable use of your aviation resources (for example, by transporting persons seeking medical care or donating flight time to youth and environmental programs).
- ❑ Participate in aviation-related fundraising events.
- ❑ Consider instructing for Civil Air Patrol or Coast Guard Auxiliary as a way to increase overall instructional experience while also giving back to the community.
- ❑ Express appreciation to controllers and service personnel for their valuable assistance.
- ❑ Invite constructive criticism from your fellow aviators and instructors, and provide the same when asked.
- ❑ Adhere to the highest ethical principles in all aviation dealings, including business practices.
- ❑ Seek to resolve disputes quickly and informally.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ❑ A one-page summary of the Code of Conduct’s provisions is available at www.secureav.com/FIMCC-Summary.doc.
- ❑ *Notes for Instructors* assists in teaching the Code of Conduct. Available at www.secureav.com/Notes-for-Instructors.pdf.
- ❑ *Notes for Prospective Implementers* helps facilitate Code of Conduct implementation. Available at www.secureav.com/Notes-for-Implementers.pdf.
- ❑ Resources to help *[insert your organization here]* advance instructor skills and promote flight safety are available at [www.\[your organization\].org](http://www.[your organization].org).
- ❑ Annotated *Commentary* helps interpret the Code of Conduct and provides source materials. Available at www.secureav.com.
- ❑ Resources to help develop and teach passenger briefings are available at <http://www.secureav.com/Passenger-Briefing-Listings-Page.html>.
- ❑ Further information about aviation instruction is available at:
 - FAA:** www.faa.gov;
www.faasafety.gov
 - AOPA:** www.aopa.org
 - EAA:** www.eaa.org
 - NAFI:** www.nafinet.org
 - SAFE:** www.safepilots.org
- ❑ The AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT, the AVIATORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT, the FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS 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.

ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Airworthiness Directives
AFSS	Automated Flight Service Station
AGL	Above Ground Level
ATC	Air Traffic Control
CRM	Crew Resource Management
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FBO	Fixed Base Operator
IFR	Instrument Flight Rules
ILS	Instrument Landing System
IMC	Instrument Meteorological Conditions
IPC	Instrument Proficiency Check
MSL	Mean Sea Level
SB	Service Bulletin
SMS	Safety Management Systems
SRM	Single Pilot Resource Management
VFR	Visual Flight Rules
VMC	Visual Meteorological Conditions

NOTICE

The *[insert your organization’s Code of Conduct]* is a customized version of the FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT created by Michael S. Baum. ©2003-2011 Michael S. Baum. All Rights Reserved. Terms of Use are available at <http://www.secureav.com>.

Pilots and the aviation community may use the 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 FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT is a living document, intended to be updated periodically to reflect changes in aviation instruction practices and the aviation environment. Please send your suggestions, edits, errata, questions, and comments to: PEB@secureav.com.

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