

**MODEL AERONAUTICAL
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.**
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August 1999 - From the Federal Secretary

Civil Aviation Order 95-21

The flying of free flight and radio controlled model aircraft out of doors is currently subject to the requirements of Civil Aviation Order 95-21. Sadly, it seems that not every member is aware of that fact and consequently, unaware of the restrictions applying to the flying of models. The text of the CAO is contained in the MAAA Manual of Procedures, a document approved by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority. Your club can obtain copies from your State/Territory Association. These should not be bundled up with the papers accumulated by your club secretary but should be posted on the notice board in the club room or elsewhere where they can be read by members and guests.

The main requirements are:

- No flying within four kilometres of an aerodrome without CASA approval;
- No flying above 300 feet except in a designated model flying area or with approval of CASA;
- No flying with 30 metres of anyone not involved in the operation of the models.

The last point is most important. During the period of operation, a model aircraft must not come within 30 metres of spectators etc. If your club permits children or family members in the pit area, that area must not be closer to the flying area than 30 metres.

The controlling document changes its name in June 2000 when it becomes Part 101 of Civil Aviation Regulations. There will be some variation in some of the restrictions but, because the document is not yet finalised, I cannot advise you of the changes just yet.

Public Liability Insurance

As a condition of cover, the Underwriter requires that, before a member may fly solo, he be assessed by his fellow club members as being competent to do so. Otherwise, he **MUST** be accompanied by a competent flier able to take over control if necessary including being able to use whatever Mode the transmitter is set up for. If a model is flown at other than the club field, the permission of the land owner/local authority must be obtained and all regulations, Council bylaws etc, including CAO 95-21, must be complied with.

As well as covering the MAAA members against claims for injury to persons or damage to property arising from the operation of model aircraft, the policy extends cover to affiliated clubs for their associated activities. However, the club has a responsibility to maintain its equipment in good order.

- Playground equipment, gas barbecues, canteen equipment, tractors and other mechanical equipment, tables, chairs, fences and the field surface should be inspected regularly by a responsible person and a record kept of such inspection.
- Playground equipment that is left exposed to weather needs particular attention. I can recall the welding that attached the sheet metal slippery slide to its tubular support breaking away on a slide in a Council playground. A child had fingers amputated when they were trapped between the sheet metal and the tube.
- All other activity in proximity to the mower must be stopped during mowing of the field.
- The operators of ride-on mowers and of tractors must be assessed as competent.

Two-Tier Membership.

At the present time, all members of the MAAA automatically become members of the Australian Sport Aviation Confederation (ASAC) which is recognised by the international body for sport aviation – the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) – as the National Airsport Control (NAC) for Australia. The cost to each MAAA member is currently \$3.00, half of the fee paid by other ASAC members – the glider pilots, parachutists, balloonists, hang-gliders, and ultralight pilots. ASAC passes part of that \$3.00 onto the FAI. Currently, Australia pays about Swiss Francs 33,000 to the FAI. This works out at \$1.50 of the \$3.00 fee paid to ASAC. Australia has the same grade of FAI membership as six other countries including France, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. The USA is in a membership grade of its

own and pays some SF 80,000. Australia has been trying for several years to go to a lower grade of membership (at a smaller annual fee) but with no success. Affiliation with the FAI through ASAC gives the right to compete in National and International competition as well as attempt to set records.

Nearly all of the monies paid to the FAI is used to maintain its secretariat in Lausanne with a staff of five. Because the International Aeromodelling Commission (CIAM in French) is the largest of the Airports Commissions, a large part of the Secretariat's work is for aeromodellers although the CIAM, as with the other Commissions, receive no direct funding. An overview of the work of the FAI is available at its web site www.fai.org or through the link in the MAAA web site.

There is action within at least two State Associations to introduce two-tier membership so that only those wanting to compete in competitions would become members of ASAC. The intention is to reduce the MAAA fee for non-competition members by \$3.00. What is uncertain is by how much the fee for the competition flyer would have to be increased. It is possible that the fee for them would become several hundreds of dollars.

The payment of an affiliation fee to an international body is not unique to airports. In the overall cost of aeromodelling, \$3.00 is insignificant. Our R/C aircraft and equipment cost hundreds if not thousands of dollars. Any time you go out to fly you are tacitly accepting that you might have to pay up to \$250.00 as your contribution to the excess on an insurance claim. Some R/C power fliers spill more than \$3.00 worth of fuel on the ground while refuelling during a day's flying. It has been a very long time since an aeromodelling magazine cost \$3.00.

It cost our representatives to international events many thousands of dollars in airfares, freight of models, accommodation, rental cars etc. To add to their costs by requiring them to fully fund the cost of FAI affiliation would be a further burden. It could also lead to other activities being funded only by those who require them, for example, liaison with regulatory authorities, with a consequent complication of a multi-tier structure with a few members saving only a few net dollars.

One final thought. Tax exemption for sporting bodies on investments requires that there be competition. Without competition, the body becomes a social club. Having the word "sport" in the name of an association does not automatically confer exemption.

The Use of 10 kHz Separation

There is also some pressure to introduce operation of R/C equipment at 10 kHz separation. Currently, we operate at 20 kHz separation. The justification for operating at 10 kHz is that the equipment is available and operated in Europe where a much smaller frequency band is made available by the licensing authorities for the radio control of aircraft. I believe that only 26 spots are available. We have more than that at 20 kHz separation on the 36 MHz band together with another 14 on the 29 MHz band. A meeting of the MAAA R/C

Frequency sub committee some four years ago determined that operation at 10 kHz separation at the average club field would not be safe. The situation can be re-assessed if more information becomes available but it could depend on scrapping equipment that was more than a few years old and replacing it with compliant equipment. Obviously the MAAA will consider practical as well as theoretical aspects when assessing the situation.

Lost Trophy

The "Southbank Trophy", a perpetual trophy for R/C Pylon donated by the Dapto club has been lost. If you know who has it, please let me know so that I can advise the person looking for it.

Safety

The days of model aircraft engines not having enough power to pull the skin off a rice pudding are long gone. The larger capacity engines have enough "oomph" to drag a heavy test stand across the ground. If the ground is rough, the stand is likely to be pulled over. This happened recently to a modeller running a large capacity five-cylinder radial engine. Because of the throttle control being reversed, the engine was put to full power instead of idle. When the test stand started to fall over, the operator, who was standing in front of the engine, stopped it with his hand. He lost the top of two fingers and suffered injury to another two fingers of his left hand. I will leave it to you to identify the mistakes he made. Any break in the causal link would have meant no injury.

Gas Turbine Engines

Regulations covering the operation of gas turbine engines have been agreed by the State and Territory associations. Regrettably, the qualifications for inspectors to apply the regulations have yet to be agreed but this situation might soon be rectified. As an interim measure, one or two people in several but not all states have been given temporary authorisation. It is important to know that, irrespective of weight, all model aircraft powered by gas turbine engines require a Permit to Fly issued in the name of the pilot(s) of the aircraft. Two of the requirements for GT-powered aircraft are:

- a fuel shut-off valve independent of the engine control unit must be fitted; and
- brakes capable of holding the aircraft at idle thrust must be installed.

Because of the higher speed potential of GT-powered aircraft, the fitting of a GT engine to an aircraft designed for a ducted fan installation is not acceptable without an independent assessment of the strength margins.