

## Student Pilots

Welcome to the world of General Aviation!



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## STUDENT PILOTS' MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

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

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# INTRODUCTION

Becoming a pilot is a truly exhilarating and rewarding endeavor. As a newcomer to general aviation (GA) you will be exposed to many new and exciting precepts. It is our desire to share with you some of the values associated with being an exemplary GA pilot as illustrated in this Student Pilot's Model Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct).

As you pursue the goal of learning to fly, careful attention to understanding safety and excellence greatly enhances the quality of your current and future training (and may even accelerate it). It also helps you to cultivate a philosophy or attitude toward flying that will serve you and society well throughout your flying career.

This Code of Conduct is provided to you by Avemco Insurance Company. It presents a vision of excellence for student pilots (whether they are seeking a Sport Pilot, Recreational Pilot or Private Pilot certificate) with principles that 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. Some of the provisions of this Code of Conduct have been simplified to accommodate the novice; after gaining more knowledge and experience, student pilots should refer to the Aviators' Model Code of Conduct (see Additional Resources, page 8) instead.



## THE PRINCIPLES:

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

1. General Responsibilities of Student Pilots
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 student pilots might integrate the principles into their own training. The Sample Recommended Practices (which include selected personal minimums) can help student pilots and their instructors 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 student pilot, mission, aircraft, and training program*. 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.

## BENEFITS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT:

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

- ◆ highlighting important practices that will help student pilots become better, safer aviators,
- ◆ suggesting a *mental framework* for flight training,
- ◆ 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 pilots' contributions to the GA community and society at large,
- ◆ encouraging the development and adoption of ethical guidelines, and
- ◆ bridging the gap between student and certificated pilots, with the goal of advancing a common aviation culture.

# STUDENT PILOTS' MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT - PRINCIPALS

## I. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT PILOTS

Student 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 (for example, minimums), as developed with your flight instructor,
  - 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 others depend on you.
- Recognize, accept, and plan for the costs of implementing proper safety practices (often greater than expected).
- Learn to identify prevailing conditions and adapt to changing in-flight conditions as directed by your certificated flight instructor.
- 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 approval of these materials by your certificated flight instructor.
- If the weather doesn't look good, it probably isn't – don't push it.
- Learn the performance limitations of all aircraft you fly, and how to plan flights and determine fuel requirements.

- Understand and use appropriate procedures in the event radio communications are lost.
- Be familiar with The Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR). They represent the distilled wisdom of more than 80 years of flying experience.
- Commit to making personal wellness a precondition of flying.
- See and be seen. Learn and 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.
- 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.
- Exercise great caution when maneuvering at low altitudes.
- Develop a firm understanding of effective decision making.
- Adhere to applicable flying club/school and Fixed Base Operator/flight center rules and operating practices.
- Learn the fundamentals well before proceeding to more advanced techniques and maneuvers.

## II. PASSENGERS AND PEOPLE ON THE SURFACE

Student pilots should:

- a. manage risks and avoid unnecessary risks to people and property on the surface and in other aircraft,
- b. learn to avoid operations that may alarm or annoy passengers or people on the surface, and
- c. pre-brief every flight with your flight instructor on planned flight procedures and be informed of any significant or unusual risks associated with the flight.

\* *Explanation: When soloing, you are responsible for your personal safety and the safety of people on the ground and in other aircraft. Although student pilots do not carry passengers, your training should prepare you to take on the additional responsibilities of doing so once you achieve your pilot certificate.*

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Learn how to keep your future passengers as safe as possible –as though they were your closest loved ones.
- Seek to improve safety margins, and always act conservatively to maintain flight safety.
- Learn how to provide informative passenger briefings.

- Learn how to use passengers as safety resources – for example, by having them identify nearby aircraft, organize charts, and keep track of landmarks.
- Become familiar with, and if feasible, consider obtaining additional insurance coverage.

### III. TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY

**Student pilots should:**

- a. participate in training sufficient to master the art of flying and achieve 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,
  - e. accurately log hours flown and maneuvers practiced to satisfy training requirements, and
  - f. require professionalism from your flight instructor.
- \* *Explanation: Your training and proficiency underlie aviation 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—all to the student pilot's benefit.*

#### Sample Recommended Practices:

- Pursue a rigorous, life-long course of aviation study.
- Commit to achieve and maintain proficiency in flight safety as well as to learn the efficient and functional operation of aviation equipment.
- Understand and comply with the privileges and limitations of your student pilot certificate.
- Attend aviation training programs offered by industry organizations or the Federal Aviation Administration.
- Keep up to date with diverse and relevant aviation publications.
- To optimize your flight training experience seek to train at least once every week consistently.
- Study and develop a practical knowledge of aviation weather.
- Avoid practicing training maneuvers near highly populated areas.
- Develop a practical understanding of the mechanics and systems of each aircraft you fly.
- Communication is the key to all good relationships—communicate with your flight instructor (and other flight school personnel) on a continuous basis. If your training needs are not being satisfied, discuss them with your flight instructor and consider changing flight instructors.

- Register at [www.faasafety.gov](http://www.faasafety.gov) for safety meeting announcements and safety literature.

### IV. SECURITY

**Student 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. conform to designated flight school procedures to 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.
- 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.



## V. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

**Student 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 relevant applicable local noise abatement procedures and adhere to them whenever it is safe to do so.
- Conform to recommended practices (such as those of the National Park Service) when flying/training near wilderness and environmentally sensitive areas. Consider the impact of aircraft on wildlife and people on the surface.

## VI. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

**Student 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, and
  - c. use transponders unless otherwise authorized by Air Traffic Control (ATC), inoperable, or not equipped, and become familiar with and use ATC "flight following" services.
- \* *Explanation: Innovative, compact, inexpensive technologies have greatly expanded the capabilities of GA aircraft. This Section encourages student pilots to learn about and use such safety-enhancing technologies.*

**Sample Recommended Practices:**

- When practicable, learn new technologies that advance flight safety, and train to use them properly. Learn and understand the features and limitations of such technologies.
- Use radios and transponders consistently, except when not authorized.

## VII. ADVANCEMENT & PROMOTION OF GENERAL AVIATION

**Student 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,
- 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.*

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This Student Pilots' Model Code of Conduct and the Aviators' Model Code of Conduct are available at [www.secureav.com](http://www.secureav.com).

Resources to help prospective student pilots find flight instructors and evaluate the particular student-flight instructor "fit" are available at:

## AOPA

<http://flighttraining.aopa.org/learntofly>  
[www.aopa.org/learntofly](http://www.aopa.org/learntofly)

## BE A PILOT

[www.beapilot.com](http://www.beapilot.com)

## NAFI

[www.nafinet.org](http://www.nafinet.org)

Additional resources to help advance pilot skills and promote flight safety are available at:

[www.avemco.com/briefingroom/briefingroom.asp](http://www.avemco.com/briefingroom/briefingroom.asp)

## NOTICE

This Student Pilots' Model Code of Conduct is a customized version of the Aviators' Model Code of Conduct created by Michael S. Baum. ©2003-2005 Michael S. Baum. All Rights Reserved. Terms of Use are available at [www.secureav.com](http://www.secureav.com). Special thanks to Jim Lauerman, Executive Vice President, Avemco for advancing the Student Pilots' Model Code of Conduct.

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Aviators and the aviation training community may use the Student Pilots' 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 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 the Permanent Editorial Board at [PEB@secureav.com](mailto:PEB@secureav.com).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## PERSONAL PLEDGE (Optional)

I voluntarily commit to myself that I will adhere to this Code of Conduct to advance my flight training and safety and to better the aviation community.

Signed:

*Student Pilot*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ABBREVIATIONS

**AGL:** Above Ground Level

**FBO:** Fixed Base Operator

**ATC:** Air Traffic Control

**GA:** General Aviation

**CFI:** Certificated Flight Instructor

**TFR:** Temporary Flight Restrictions

**FAA:** Federal Aviation Administration

**VFR:** Visual Flight Rules

**FAR:** Federal Aviation Regulations