

# **MICROLIGHT PILOTS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

**(SOUTH AFRICAN VERSION)**

**by Glyn Hall**

**(A GUIDE TO GOOD AIRMANSHIP)**



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**Suggested recommended guide of practices for microlight  
pilots to advance flight safety, airmanship and the microlight  
community**

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

The South African version of the MICROLIGHT PILOTS' CODE OF CONDUCT (Code of Conduct or MPCC) presents a suggested broad guidance for microlight (MPL) pilots to help them advance airmanship, flight safety, the culture of microlighting and the vibrancy of microlighting in general. The Code of Conduct addresses issues of importance to pilots and advances a vision of excellence in aviation. Its principles both complement and supplement minimum regulatory standards - since what is merely legal in aviation is not necessarily safe or wise.

### ***The Principles:***

The Code of Conduct consists of the following seven sections (each containing principles), with associated explanations:

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

### ***The Sample Recommended Practices:***

To further the effective use of its principles by our microlight pilots, the Code of Conduct provides Sample Recommended Practices following each section. These offer examples of ways pilots might integrate the principles into their own practices. The Sample Recommended Practices combine recommended practices with certain personal minimums. They can serve as templates to help pilots and local microlight organisations (e.g., clubs) develop practices uniquely suited to their own activities and situations. Unlike the Code of Conduct principles themselves, which are immutable, *the Sample Recommended Practices may be modified to satisfy the unique capabilities and requirements of each pilot and mission.* 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 MICROLIGHT Pilots' Code of Conduct:***

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

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

# ***MICROLIGHT PILOT'S CODE OF CONDUCT - PRINCIPLES***

## **I. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF AVIATORS**

**In undertaking aviation activities, pilots should:**

- a. make safety their number one priority,**
- b. seek excellence in airmanship,**
- c. develop and exercise good judgment,**
- d. recognise 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:***

MPCC Section I serves as a preamble to and umbrella for the MPCC's other principles. It emphasizes safety, excellence, risk management, responsibility, and lays the foundation for accountability and heightened diligence.

***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- Recognize, accept and plan for the costs (often greater than expected) of implementing proper safety practices, in terms of time, money and personal effort.
- Approach flying with the utmost seriousness and diligence, recognizing that your life and the lives of your passengers and others depend on it.
- Accurately 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, over water, and over rugged, mountainous or forested terrain, and take steps to manage those risks effectively and prudently without exceeding your personal parameters.
- Create, develop, use and periodically review and refine a Critical Decision Making (CDM) Personal Minimums Checklist. Seek the input and review of these materials by a recognised microlight flight instructor.
- Consult with local pilots or flying schools before flying in unfamiliar areas (e.g., when on holiday). Such input will be invaluable regarding undocumented no-fly zones (re: noise, game farms, poultry farms, etc.), density altitude, known turbulent and downdraft areas, and other local conditions as well as optimal times to fly. Fly courteously and follow the rules! Keep in mind that your indiscretions can permanently affect their future flying environment.
- Ensure that there are no other aircraft, vehicles, people or open hangars behind your aircraft when you startup. Make this check part of your pre-flight inspection. When taxiing to park your aircraft (e.g., after landing), stop short of the parking area and push your aircraft into the parking position if it will affect other aircraft, people, equipment or other property. This is particularly relevant on dusty airfields.
- 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 landing lights and strobes (except while taxiing). Identify yourself (using your callsign) and that you are flying a microlight, state your location, altitude and direction/destination (e.g., "Microlight Charlie Mike Echo overhead Klipheuwel silos, 2000 feet, routing for Fisantekraal).

- Only use location identifiers (landmarks) found on the *official aeronautical charts*. Remember that not all pilots are from your area and may not be familiar with local landmarks,
- Minimize turns and maneuvers below 500 feet AGL (except as required for landings and obstacle departure procedures).
- Remember that accidents and incidents (however minor) are non trivial and should be used as examples to educate (and not to humour). New and low time pilots should aspire to the attitudes displayed by more experienced pilots.
- Comply with or exceed the requirements for mandatory inspections and Airworthiness Directives (ADs), and voluntarily adhere to SACAA and manufacturers' recommended inspections, service bulletins and checklists.
- Adhere to applicable local flying club and airfield rules and operating practices.
- Develop and adhere to personal conservative operating parameters, as well as good airmanship principals such as:
  - *Circuit Procedures* - seek to keep your circuit (traffic pattern) procedures in-line with those of other aircraft in the circuit, particularly when flying at unfamiliar airfields and where flight training is undertaken. Aircraft in the circuit are usually flown by low-time pilots who may not react as anticipated. Many Private Pilot License (PPL) schools' training circuits are fairly wide. Be patient - neither abbreviate your circuit nor cut in front of the other aircraft unless requested to do so by them (or a controller).
  - *Solo Flying* - always leave word of your intended flight prior to departure, even when flying around 'the patch' solo. If the unforeseen does happen and your whereabouts are not discovered, the consequences could be ominous (for you). Consider flying using the 'buddy system' (i.e., flying in groups of two or more aircraft).
  - *Departures* - select a "departure alternate" airport in case an emergency occurs and you are unable to return to the departure airport (just after lift-off). Remember the wind in some locations can reach 30 knots or more without warning.
  - *Landing* - never attempt to land at an unfamiliar airfield without first becoming appraised of prevailing adverse conditions (e.g., crosswinds), even where local pilots in similar aircraft are flying (since local pilots are generally familiar with local conditions). Rather than attempt to land at an unfamiliar field with strong cross winds (e.g., a coastal field with a 20kt+ crosswind) consider landing at an alternate field with more favorable conditions.

## II. PASSENGERS AND PARTIES ON THE SURFACE

In undertaking aviation activities, pilots should:

- a. maintain passenger safety first and then reasonable passenger comfort,
- b. manage and avoid unnecessary risks to passengers and to parties and property on the surface and in other aircraft,
- c. brief passengers on standard and any planned nonstandard flight procedures and inform them of any significant or unusual risks associated with the intended flight,
- d. seek to prevent unsafe conduct by passengers, and
- e. avoid operations that may alarm or annoy passengers or parties 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 parties 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.
- It is currently illegal to request remuneration for 'introductory' flights unless you are doing this under Section 141 of the Approved Training Criteria at an approved airfield.
- Seek to improve safety margins, and always act conservatively to maintain flight safety.
- Tactfully disclose risks to your passenger and accept a prospective passenger's decision to refrain from participating.
- Require that the passenger signs a standard microlight indemnity form before boarding the aircraft (whether or not the flight is for remuneration)
- Require that passengers wear seat belts and shoulder harnesses, headsets and helmets (in open cockpit aircraft - e.g., Trikes) during all flight operations.
- When practical, provide an informative passenger briefing. See the Sample Passenger Briefing referenced in "Additional Resources" at the end of this Code of Conduct
- 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 identifying nearby aircraft whilst flying, etc.
- Screen unfamiliar passengers for safety purposes.

### III. TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY

#### **Pilots should:**

- a. participate in training sufficient to maintain or (preferably) improve their proficiency in addition to satisfying 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:***

Pilot training and proficiency go to the heart of aviation safety. Recurrent training is a major factor in promoting flight safety. Such training includes two complementary components -- air and ground training. Each of these components contributes uniquely to flight safety and cannot substitute for the other or satisfy its requirements. Training sufficient to promote flight safety may well exceed what is required by law.

#### ***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- Commit to pursuing a rigorous, life-long course of aviation study.
- Create and periodically review a personalized program of study or series of training exercises. Adhere to a training regime that will yield greater flight proficiency.
- Train for flight and survival in unique environments (including, e.g., water, remote bush/forest/desert, and mountainous terrain) and carry adequate survival equipment.
- Know your aircraft's performance limitations, how to plan flights and determine fuel requirements, and appropriate procedures in the event you lose communications.
- Commit to achieving and maintaining proficiency in flight safety as well as the efficient and functional operation of technology-intensive aviation equipment.
- Know current aviation regulations and understand their implications as well as their underlying rationale.
- Understand and comply with the limitations of your certificate's privileges and ratings.
- Keep up to date with diverse and relevant aviation publications.
- Study and develop a practical knowledge of aviation weather.
- When you receive your NOTAMs and Aviation Information Circulars (AICs) etc., review reports of recent or nearby accidents or incidents, focusing on operational aspects that may have contributed to the accidents or incidents.
- Complete at least one training flight in an unfamiliar-model aircraft, and discern differences among similar aircraft (i.e., same make and model but varying tail numbers) before attempting a cross-country flight or carrying passengers in an unfamiliar craft. (e.g., hiring a Trike from a school, etc.)
- Refrain from undertaking training maneuvers near highly populated areas.
- Seek to fly at least once every two weeks, to include at least three take-offs and landings.
- Develop a practical knowledge of the mechanical operation (including "systems knowledge") of (all) the aircraft you fly.
- Join and actively participate in A MICROLIGHT ORGANISATION.
- Seek to maintain currency that exceeds minimum regulatory requirements.
- Seek to participate in a MICROLIGHT Pilots Proficiency Program (MPPP) and/or other designated MICROLIGHT ORGANISATIONS proficiency program at least once every 24 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 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 in the USA 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 whole GA community. Accordingly, this section responds proactively to various new threats and vulnerabilities.

### ***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- Check your NOTAM's and AIC's thoroughly for temporary flight restrictions before every flight.
- Use additional or enhanced locks or other anti-theft devices to secure all aircraft.
- Report flight safety hazards or anomalies (such as poor radio coverage) and security concerns to the appropriate authorities.

## 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 microlight community, to avoid unfavorable public perceptions. Indeed, environmental issues such as noise pollution can close airports and otherwise jeopardize microlighting. Other environmental impacts of GA have garnered less attention but nevertheless deserve emphasis.

### ***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- When fuel sampling rather return the uncontaminated fuel samples to the fuel tank(s), or dispose of fuel properly. (i.e., don't throw the fuel on the ground)
- 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 Parks Service) when flying near nature reserves, bird sanctuaries, game parks and environmentally sensitive areas. Consider the impact of aircraft on wildlife and people on the surface.
- Patronise service providers (such as airfields, repair services and aircraft cleaners) that adhere to environmentally friendly practices.

## VI. USE OF AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY

To enhance flight safety, pilots should:

- a. become familiar with and properly use appropriate available cost-effective technologies,
- b. monitor applicable airport advisory frequencies and report their position when approaching non-towered or unattended airports and other higher-risk areas, and
- c. become a student of all on-board technology and develop and exercise skills to operate such equipment (e.g. GPS) effectively while keeping your "head out of the cockpit" and flying the plane first.

### *Explanation:*

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

### *Sample Recommended Practices:*

- Use radios consistently, except when not authorised.
- 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 back-up batteries or some form of back-up power supply (e.g., solar charger/power supply) during all flight operations.
- Maintain all avionics and flight instruments to keep them operational, current and approved for the intended flight.
- Whenever practicable, avoid flying in or near controlled airspace. If it is unavoidable, adhere to ATC instructions.
- 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.

## VII. ADVANCEMENT AND PROMOTION OF MICROLIGHTING

### **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 microlight community.**
- f. not 'chat' on designated communication frequencies.**

### ***Explanation:***

Microlighting has a well-recognized (and undeserved) public relations problem that is, in many respects, worsening. Vigilance and responsive action by the microlight community are essential to ensure microlighting vitality and to enhance the microlighting experience for both pilots and others.

### ***Sample Recommended Practices:***

- Strive to conform fully to the MPCC.
- Serve as a Microlight ambassador to the public by providing accurate information and refuting misinformation concerning Microlight activities, and by encouraging potential student pilots.
- Volunteer in support of Microlighting.
- Make charitable use of your aviation resources (for example, by transporting persons seeking medical care or donating flight time to youth, environmental and development programs).
- Show appreciation of controllers and service personnel for their assistance and good service.
- Patronise aviation-related fund-raising events.
- Invite constructive criticism from your fellow aviators (and provide the same when asked).
- Adhere to the highest ethical standards in all of your aviation dealings, including business practices.
- Seek to resolve disputes informally and congenially.
- If you are 'chatting', use 123.45 and not a designated communication frequency (e.g. 124.8, 126.5, etc.)

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- This South African version of the MICROLIGHT PILOTS' CODE OF CONDUCT is available in Adobe Acrobat .pdf format from at <http://users.iafrica.com/g/gl/glynhall/micro/mpcc.pdf>. The AVIATORS' MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT is available at: <http://www.secureav.com>.
- A Sample Passenger Briefing (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 in Adobe Acrobat .pdf format from at <http://users.iafrica.com/g/gl/glynhall/micro/passbrf.pdf> and at: <http://www.secureav.com>.

### **ABBREVIATIONS**

AD	Airworthiness Directive
AGL	Above Ground Level
ATC	Air Traffic Control
CDM	Critical Decision Making
GA	General Aviation
MISASA	Microlight Section of the AeroClub of South Africa
MPCC	MICROLIGHT Pilots' Code of Conduct
MPL	Microlight Pilot License
PPL	Private Pilot License
SACAA (aka CAA)	South African Civil Aviation Authority
TFR	Temporary Flight Rules
VFR	Visual Flight Rules

### **NOTICE**

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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 South African version of the MICROLIGHT PILOTS' 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 both: [glynhall@iafrica.com](mailto:glynhall@iafrica.com) and [peb@secureav.com](mailto:peb@secureav.com).

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