VERSION 1.0

COPA
PILOTS' CODE
OF CONDUCT

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

Provided to the Aviation Community by the:

Cirrus Owners and Pilots Association

INTRODUCTION

The COPA PILOTS' CODE OF CONDUCT (Code of Conduct or CPCC) presents broad guidance for general aviation (GA) pilots to help them advance airmanship, flight safety, the culture of GA and the vibrancy of GA in general. The Code of Conduct addresses issues of importance to aviators 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 GENERAL AVIATION

The Sample Recommended Practices:

To further the effective use of its principles by our Cirrus 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 GA organizations 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, except that instrument flight rule (IFR)-specific Sample Recommended Practices appear last.

Benefits of the COPA Pilots' Code of Conduct:

The Code of Conduct benefits 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 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 governmental regulation, and
- promoting GA and making flying a more rewarding experience.

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COPA 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. 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: CPCC Section I serves as a preamble to and umbrella for the CPCC'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, at night, over water, and over rugged, mountainous or forested terrain, and take steps to manage those risks effectively and prudently without exceeding your personal parameters (*see* CPCC I.e.).
- ❑ Develop, use and periodically review and refine your COPA Critical Decision Making (CDM) Personal Minimums Checklist. Seek the input and review of these materials by a certified flight instructor.
- ❑ Know your personal susceptibility to hypoxia (*e.g,* 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 landing 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.
- ❑ Adhere to applicable flying club 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.
- *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), 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; avoid flying in convective conditions, and fly IFR whenever practical at night (if rated).

- In an unstable approach below 500 ft. AGL in VMC, go around. In an unstable approach below 1,000 ft. AGL in IMC, go missed.

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.
- 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 *all* flight operations.
- When practical, provide an informative passenger briefing, including a complete explanation of the CAPS system in advance of the anticipated flight date.
- 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, organizing charts, etc.
- Screen unfamiliar passengers for safety purposes.
- If practicable, consider using available precision approaches when flying in IMC or at night with passengers.

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 including annual participation in the COPA Critical Decision Making (CDM) Course,**

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 new ratings, certifications and endorsements—or at the very least greater flight proficiency. The Cirrus Pilot Proficiency Program (CPPP) is a good example of the type of training recommended.
- ❑ Train for flight and survival in unique environments (including, *e.g.,* water, remote/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.
- ❑ Attend aviation training programs offered by industry or the FAA on an as-needed basis.
- ❑ 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 operational aspects that may have contributed to the accidents or incidents.
- ❑ Demonstrate conformance to applicable FAA practical test standards (PTS) periodically, and complete additional training as necessary to continue to satisfy such standards.
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Refrain from undertaking 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 take-offs and landings.
- ❑ Develop a practical knowledge of the mechanical operation (including "systems knowledge") of all aircraft you fly.

- ❑ Join and actively participate in the Cirrus Owners and Pilots Association.
- ❑ Voluntarily undergo the equivalent of a Flight Review annually rather than every two years and, if instrument rated, an instrument proficiency check (IPC) every six months.
- ❑ Seek to maintain currency (including for day, night, and IFR operations) that exceeds minimum regulatory requirements.
- ❑ Seek to participate in a COPA Pilots Proficiency Program (CPPP) and/or other designated COPA 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 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) except when not authorized.
- ❑ Use additional or enhanced locks or other anti-theft devices 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.
- ❑ When flying VFR consider using ATC "flight following" (In Europe, "Flight Information Service") when available.
- ❑ Consider flying IFR (if rated) whenever practicable.
- ❑ Avoid deviating from an active flight plan (both IFR and VFR) or from a clearance without notifying ATC.

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.

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,

c. become a student of all on-board technology and develop and exercise skills to operate such equipment (*e.g.,* GPS, MFD, HIS) effectively while keeping your "head out of the cockpit" and *flying the plane first*, 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.
- ❑ Use VFR "flight following" whenever practicable.
- ❑ Whenever practicable, avoid flying in or near level 2 (or higher) weather radar returns, especially when convection is present or expected.
- ❑ Recognize situations in which the need to preprogram or set up automated flight technologies may undermine their utility (*e.g.,* last-minute programming of an approach).
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ 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.

VII. ADVANCEMENT AND 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 pilots and others.

Sample Recommended Practices:

- Strive to conform fully to the CPCC.
- 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).
- Show appreciation of controllers and service personnel for their assistance and good service.
- Patronize 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.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- This COPA PILOTS' CODE OF CONDUCT is available at < http://www.cirruspilots.org/cpcc >. The AVIATORS' MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT is available at: < http://www.secureav.com >.
- Additional resources to aid the Cirrus pilot in advancing pilot skills and promoting flight safety are available at: < http://www.cirruspilots.org/public/cppp/schedule.html >.
- 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 at: < http://www.cirruspliots.org/briefing > and at: < http://www.secureav.com >.

ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Airworthiness Directive
AGL	Above Ground Level
ATC	Air Traffic Control
CDM	Critical Decision Making
COPA	Cirrus Owners and Pilots Association
CPCC	COPA Pilots' Code of Conduct
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 Rules
VFR	Visual Flight Rules

NOTICE

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 COPA 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: < mason@hollandplace.net > and < michael@secureav.com >.

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