

# **STUDENT PILOTS' MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT**

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

*Welcome to the world of General Aviation!*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Becoming a pilot is an 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.

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 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 the 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*, below) instead.

The Code of Conduct consists of the following seven sections (each containing principles and *Sample Recommended Practices*).

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

- I. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT PILOTS
- II. PASSENGERS AND PEOPLE ON THE SURFACE
- III. TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY
- IV. SECURITY
- V. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
- VI. USE OF TECHNOLOGY
- VII. 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 how 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 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 will 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 pilots' 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.

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## *STUDENT PILOTS' MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT - PRINCIPLES*

### **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 their flight instructors,**
- 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, and 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. Such costs are often greater than expected.
- Learn to identify and adapt to changing in-flight conditions as directed by your flight instructor. Be willing to make a 180 degree turn when conditions fall below your personal minimums.
- 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. Review these materials with your 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, properly secure cargo and determine both fuel requirements, and weight and balance.
- Understand and use appropriate procedures in the event radio communications are lost.
- Be familiar with The Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs). They represent the distilled wisdom of more than 80 years of flying experience.
- Make personal wellness a precondition of flight.
- Examine yourself; recognize hazardous attitudes, and think about antidotes.
- See and be seen. Learn and employ techniques for seeing and avoiding other aircraft. Scan for traffic continuously. Enhance your visibility to avoid other aircraft, such as with the use of radios, lights, and strobes.
- When planning 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. Also, evaluate terrain to be overflown and modify flight path to maximize survivability in case of engine failure.
- Evaluate the weather before each flight using all available appropriate aviation resources.
- Exercise great caution when maneuvering at low altitudes.
- Develop a good understanding of effective decision-making.
- Adhere to applicable flying club/school and aircraft rental provider 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 future passengers or people on the surface, and**
- c. pre-brief your plans for every flight including 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 act conservatively to maintain flight safety.
- ❑ Learn how to provide informative briefings for your future passengers.
- ❑ Learn how to use your future 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. **demand 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.

- ❑ Perform the flights and maneuvers required to exceed published minimum training and currency requirements, and properly document them in your flight record.
- ❑ Complete scenario-based training to supplement stick and rudder training with decision making and risk management skills.
- ❑ Know how to plan flights and use the manufacturer’s flight manual to determine your aircraft’s performance and limitations; plan flight and fuel requirements with a prudent margin of safety. Understand the importance of properly securing all loose items in the aircraft.
- ❑ Achieve and maintain proficiency in flight safety as well as 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.
- ❑ Seek out and study diverse and relevant aviation publications.
- ❑ Obtain training at least once every week to optimize your flight training experience.
- ❑ Study and develop a systematic approach to understand aviation weather.
- ❑ Avoid practicing training maneuvers near congested areas.
- ❑ Develop a practical understanding of the mechanics and systems of each aircraft you fly.
- ❑ Communicate with your flight instructor and other flight school personnel on a continuous basis. Communication is the key to all good relationships. If your training needs are not being satisfied, discuss them with your flight instructor and consider changing flight instructors.
- ❑ Register at <http://www.faa.gov> for safety meeting announcements and safety literature and review appropriate online safety courses there.

## 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 NOTAMS thoroughly, including for temporary flight restrictions (TFRs) during preflight preparation and during long flights.
- ❑ Confirm that airport 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.
- ❑ If practicable, fly well above noise sensitive areas, or seek to avoid them altogether.
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Become familiar with hazardous material (“Hazmat”) dangers, requirements, and practices.

## 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 frequently when approaching airports without an operating control tower, and other higher-risk areas, and
- c. use transponders 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.

## VII. ADVANCEMENT AND 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.

**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 student pilots and others.

**Sample Recommended Practices:**

- ❑ Strive to conform to the AMCC or, preferably, your own instructor-approved Code of Conduct.
- ❑ Volunteer in support of general aviation.
- ❑ Express appreciation to controllers and service personnel for their assistance and good service.
- ❑ Participate in aviation-related fund raising events.
- ❑ Seek feedback from experienced pilots to enhance your training.
- ❑ Adhere to the highest ethical principles in all aviation dealings, including business practices.
- ❑ Seek to resolve disputes informally and congenially.

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### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ❑ 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>

BE A PILOT: <http://www.beapilot.com>

FAA Safety Program: <http://www.faa.gov>

NAFI: <http://www.nafinet.org/> .

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#### Abbreviations

AGL	Above Ground Level
ATC	Air Traffic Control
CFI	Certificated Flight Instructor
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAR	Federal Aviation Regulations
GA	General Aviation
TFR	Temporary Flight Restrictions
VFR	Visual Flight Rules

## ***NOTICE***

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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***

The Code of Conduct has had the benefit of extensive editorial comment and suggestions by a diverse body of the GA community, and beyond. See "ACKNOWLEDGMENTS" at <http://www.secureav.com/ack.pdf> . The Permanent Editorial Board for the Code of Conduct is presented at <http://www.secureav.com/PEB.pdf> .

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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

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