



Federal Aviation
Administration

Model Aircraft Operations

Model aircraft operations are for hobby or recreational purposes only.

The FAA has partnered with several industry associations to promote Know Before You Fly, a campaign to educate the public about using unmanned aircraft safely and responsibly. Individuals flying for hobby or recreation are strongly encouraged to follow safety guidelines, which include:

- Fly below 400 feet and remain clear of surrounding obstacles
- Keep the aircraft within visual line of sight at all times
- Remain well clear of and do not interfere with manned aircraft operations
- Don't fly within 5 miles of an airport unless you contact the airport and control tower before flying
- Don't fly near people or stadiums
- Don't fly an aircraft that weighs more than 55 lbs
- Don't be careless or reckless with your unmanned aircraft – you could be fined for endangering people or other aircraft

The statutory parameters of a model aircraft operation are outlined in Section 336 of Public Law 112-95 (the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012) (PDF). Individuals who fly within the scope of these parameters do not require permission to operate their UAS; any flight outside these parameters (including any non-hobby, non-recreational operation) requires FAA authorization (www.faa.gov/uas/civil_operations/). For example, using a UAS to take photos for your personal use is recreational; using the same device to take photographs or videos for compensation or sale to another individual would be considered a non-recreational operation.

More about the Know Before You Fly campaign

Read the FAA's Interpretation of the Special Rule for Model Aircraft (www.faa.gov/uas/media/model_aircraft_spec_rule.pdf) (PDF)

Read the Do's and Don'ts of Model Aircraft Operations