

Required Reading

for Jet Pilots

by: Bob Violett

The February 2011 issue of Model Aviation features an interview of an F.A.A. representative by A.M.A. representatives, Dave Mathewson and Rich Hansen relative to the N.P.R.M. that will affect our hobby. After we understand this impending challenge, we must all ask ourselves, “what can we do to minimize the government’s interest in regulating our activities?”

A Few Suggestions

- Improve our efforts to self govern. This means that we have a thorough knowledge of the A.M.A. Safety Code, Turbine Waiver Regulations, and “See and Avoid” documents; see www.modelaircraft.org/documents.aspx. It is the responsibility of each one of us to thoroughly comprehend and abide by these documents.
- Use the “Buddy System”, i.e. help each other to accomplish the above and ensure the safety of the vehicle before and during flight.
- Ensure that the radio transmitter and E.C.U. Failsafe system is properly programmed before each flight. Know that each time that the receiver (JR DSM etc.) is “bound” to a different transmitter, the Failsafe must be reset.
- Use speed limiting devices on your jet models that are capable of 200+ mph. JetCat and Jet Central E.C.U.’s have this feature. Know the Vne of your model and limit it accordingly. See www.bvmjets.com/Pages/Speed_Control.htm for BVM jets and Skymaster jets that we have tested.
- Know that the engine must be shut down at the FIRST SIGN of a control problem. If the engine is shut down just 2-3 seconds prior to impact, the fire potential is remote. This is a public safety item.
- Avoid the sensationalism of publishing videos of any incidents that may occur. They can only hurt our cause.
- Know that agents of the Federal Government have attended jet events, and tuned into chat rooms and You Tube for the last 2-3 years and that some jet modelers have done some pretty stupid things in their presence. Others have bragged to the world just how fast a turbine powered model can fly. It is this potential (of turbine power) for extreme velocity that has attracted the attention of regulatory agencies.
- There are “Standards Committees” now working within the A.M.A. structure to support our positions to self govern. It is sensible to have guidelines that help modelers improve the safety of high performance models. Just one example of areas to be addressed is control surface actuation. Using a cheap servo on a major control surface of a high performance model just doesn’t make sense. “Cheap”

means low, or no quality control at the manufacturing and/or distribution levels. We should guard against such practice.

- Know that we have very competent representatives in the A.M.A. that are working hard to protect our freedoms. Show support and let them know that you appreciate their efforts.

Look • See • Avoid

- During the entire time that your model is airborne, your spotter's primary duty is to constantly scan the skies for man carrying aircraft operating below 3,000 ft and advise you how best to avoid any possible perception of a conflict. The pilot should always throttle back, descend, and turn away. The pilot/passengers in the real aircraft should never see a model airplane in any position that could in anyway be considered a threat.

Conclusion

The freedom to fly turbine jet models brings with it serious responsibility. Let us renew our efforts and prove that we can handle it. How we conduct our activities before and during the NPRM process is paramount to the future of our sport.

Notes: "Required Reading" was borrowed from my Naval Aviation experience. The Squadron Flight Safety Officer posted excerpts from the "Natops" manuals and recent accident reports to improve operational safety. We (the pilots) had to read and initial these weekly reminders. It was a successful effort to reduce losses of the tax payer funded fighter jets and keep us from busting our #ss.

- See also www.bvmjets.com/Pages/Safety/safety.htm for more information.