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National Altitude Authorization Reminders

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IN THE SPRING of 2025, AMA announced that many registered AMA sites in uncontrolled airspace had been authorized for an altitude extension through an agreement with the FAA. There are multiple resources, including FAQs, on the Government Affairs blog that go over all of the stipulations in detail; however, it is important to remind ourselves periodically of the broad requirements to ensure that we're being compliant and protecting the authorization for ourselves and future modelers.

The following section informs members of the agreement and can be found in digital form by following the link listed in "Sources" to the AMA in Action webpage. Local restrictions might apply, regardless of approval status. It is always best practice to verify with local leadership what site rules must be followed as well.

Altitude Authorization Briefing

If you fly at an AMA field that is covered by the national altitude extension, there are important rules that you need to follow when flying above 400 feet. These guidelines help our fields continue operating safely and legally under the FAA authorization so that future modelers can enjoy the extensions as well.

Here's what you need to know before flying:

- *Follow USC 44809 and AMA safety guidelines:* You need to be aware of and follow all AMA safety code practices, U.S. Code (USC) 44809, and any rules that apply specifically to the flying site in question.
- *Be aware of nearby aviation activity:* Clubs should be aware if their field is within 2 nautical miles of charted, manned air traffic (such as small airports) and inform members and guests of any safety mitigations or site-specific rules that they need to follow in case of possible aircraft nearby. The increased altitudes do not constitute waivers from any other law or safety rule. See the FAQs that are linked in "Sources" for documentation requirements.
- *Know site-specific limits:* Some sites have altitude or area restrictions based on their size or location. This might change during an event versus daily flying if the local leadership feels it is necessary or it is required by a separate local agreement. Remember, even if a field has received 700-foot or 1,200-foot above ground level (AGL) clearance, the club might have restrictions on when it allows pilots to utilize the space above 400 feet. Ask before you fly.
- *Understand the national authorization:* Especially if you don't regularly fly at a field that is covered by this authorization, you might not be familiar with all of the stipulations. Make sure that you read through the authorization and seek guidance from local club leadership if you don't understand a section.

- *Follow USC 44809 registration and TRUST guidelines:* USC 44809 contains a requirement to register with the FAA as a recreational flier if you operate UAS of more than 250 grams or 0.55 pounds. Additionally, it directs recreational model aircraft pilots to pass The Recreational UAS Safety Test (TRUST). If you haven't done this yet, it's quick and free to complete on AMA's website. The link can also be found in "Sources." Other Items About These Sites
- *Flying above 400 feet is only allowed during the day:* The altitude extension only applies between civil sunrise and civil sunset. If you're flying at night, you must stay at or below 400 feet AGL, unless it is otherwise specifically authorized.
- *Fixed sites are not all Class G:* This authorization applies to registered AMA sites within Class G airspace that have been submitted for review; it does not authorize altitude extensions for all modelers in Class G airspace. Members can easily view approved sites in the FAQs.
- *You must always stay within visual line of sight:* Pilots and spotters need to be able to see your aircraft clearly by eyesight.
- *Operations must follow the weather rules:* If you are operating during an event at an applicable site, look to the event managers, contest directors, and the FAA national altitude extension for guidance on weather and visibility conditions.
- *NOTAMS:* A Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) must be issued for any AMA sanctioned event in Class G airspace when you are flying above 400 feet AGL.

If you have questions that have not been addressed here, on the FAQs page, or by local leadership, AMA Headquarters can provide further guidance.

SOURCES:

TRUST

trust.modelaircraft.org

AMA in Action

modelaircraft.org/amainaction

"Filing a NOTAM"

AMA Government Affairs blog amablog.modelaircraft.org/amagov/2024/07/19/filing-a-notam

"FAQ for National Class G 7711"

AMA Government Affairs blog amablog.modelaircraft.org/amagov/2025/04/23/faq-for-nationalclass-g-7711