

BFMC Safety Bulletin No.1
June 2023

You should all now be aware of the tragic death of an RC model flyer in Spain. A gent was struck in the head by an airborne model as he walked out onto the runway to retrieve his own model following landing.

From the very brief information made available it would appear that a lack of communication between the pilot retrieving his model and the pilot still engaged in flight resulted in this tragic event.

In the light of this event the BMFA has asked model flying clubs to review their club's risk assessment. The BFMC committee are about to conduct this review.

Although the risk assessment has not yet been undertaken it is timely to refresh our memories on a few rules that are fundamental to safe flying.

Safe flying is not just about how you move your thumbs but equally about habits and attitude. Pointing a model towards the pits when you're the only one at the club carries little risk but the habit of pointing the model away from the pits on *every* occasion protects all of us on *any* occasion.

A disciplined approach to a flying session reduces the burden of thought when preparing to fly. We all have lapses in concentration, or get distracted by others, so safe habits reduce the risk of serious consequences.

The BMFA Member's Handbook has a wealth of valuable information which I'd encourage you to read. I'd recommend looking through sections 8 and 13 to start with which deal with the *Legal Controls Over Model Flying*, and *General Model Safety*, respectively.

Many of the safety recommendations and procedures contained within the BMFA handbook have been written as result of incidents that have occurred in the past. These recommendations are not suggested based upon a hypothetical risk but are there because somebody, at some point, has suffered injury, or loss, because of poor safety discipline or possibly a careless attitude.

Above and beyond the BMFA Safety Codes we have legal responsibilities. It is an offence to fly without a functioning Failsafe for example. Section 8 of the BMFA Handbook includes a summary of our Article 16 Authorisation granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. This is essential reading.

A multitude of information is available at <https://bmfa.org> under the 'More' tab. The BMFA Handbook is available at <https://handbook.bmfa.uk>

It would be nice to examine sections 8 and 13 in detail but, for the moment, the list below itemises some crucial safety points that we all need to adopt on every visit to the club. The list is not exhaustive.

1. Always point the model away from the pits and away from fellow members. If another member arrives and begins to set up their equipment near to you, such that safety can no longer be maintained, please discuss the positioning of models and equipment with the new arrival so that safe operation can be restored.
2. Do not connect batteries near the tower, connect them on the designated starting benches with restraints, at the extremities of the pits, at the bench immediately behind the pilot's box, or on the ground adjacent to the pilot's box.

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3. Do not taxi back into the pits after landing. Taxi to a safe area, retrieve and disarm the model.
4. IC models must be properly restrained when starting, again in an area at the extremity of the pits such as the designated starting benches. Ensure all people, except the starter, are behind the prop when starting.
5. When approaching the flight line to fly, request permission to walk onto the flying strip from any other pilot already flying.
6. Shout 'Take Off' and 'Landing' when undertaking these activities. Ensure you receive an acknowledgement from fellow flyers, or others approaching the flying strip, before proceeding.
7. Carry out a Failsafe check at the start of *every flying session*. It is a legal requirement, as imposed by the CAA, to have a functioning Failsafe for *every flight*. If you are unsure how to enable this function on your radio equipment, please ask.
8. With models up to 7.5kg we must maintain a horizontal distance of 30m from uninvolved persons. With models over 7.5kg we must maintain a horizontal distance of 50m from assemblies of people. We cannot overfly people under any circumstances even at heights in excess of 50m. This includes people in vehicles. (Proximity for take-off and landing varies.) Beware of vehicles driving around, or parking at, the Omex corner.
9. Carry out pre-session checks and pre-flight checks per section 13.4 and 13.5 of The Handbook , which includes a function check, at full power, of all controls prior to take off.
10. Carry out a range check of your radio equipment if it has been changed, otherwise interfered with in any way since the last flying session, or if the model has suffered a heavy landing.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Cheers,

Steve Griffiths,
Club Safety Officer.
21/06/23