

March 5, 2009

RE: IAC CHAPTER PRACTICE DAY GUIDELINES

Dear Chapter President:

Enclosed you will find a copy of the IAC Chapter Practice Day Guidelines. These guidelines have been developed to provide IAC Chapters and their members an organized and safe structure to practice their aerobatic skills while being observed and critiqued by other qualified IAC ground observers.

Please note the requirement to submit a Chapter Event Insurance Form to the EAA Risk Management Department 5 business days prior to the practice day. This IS a requirement. If a form is not submitted Risk Management cannot guarantee Chapter insurance coverage should an accident happen, and this may put the entire IAC Chapter Insurance Program at risk. So please don't put your Chapter's and other IAC Chapter's insurance coverage at risk, send in the Chapter Event Insurance Form prior to holding your Chapter's practice day.

If your Chapter has any questions regarding the guidelines or applicable insurance coverage, please contact either the IAC Office at (920) 426-6574 or the EAA Risk Management Office at (920) 426-6106.

Sincerely,



Vicki Cruse
President
International Aerobatic Club

IAC Chapter Practice Day Guidelines

The purpose of an IAC Chapter Practice Day, often referred to as a critique session or patch day, is to provide IAC members an organized and safe structure under which they may practice their aerobatic skills while being observed and critiqued by other qualified IAC ground observers.

An IAC Chapter Practice Day is not a contest; however, the same level of professionalism exhibited at an IAC contest should be present at any IAC Chapter Practice Day.

In the true spirit of IAC, an IAC Chapter Practice Day is intended to provide IAC members an opportunity to refine their aerobatic flying skills and to achieve recognition by obtaining "smooth patch" awards, all within a controlled and safe flying environment.

Above all else, an IAC Chapter Practice Day is not an air show or a venue for reckless or unsafe flying. Safety is paramount and all Federal Aviation Regulations and waivers must be strictly observed at all times.

Practice Day Manager: In order to have a safe and successful IAC Chapter Practice Day, someone needs to be in charge. This person is the Practice Day Manager who quite often will be the person named on the waiver or delegated by him or her. Their responsibilities should include:

1. Making sure the practice day is run safely and all participants are following the IAC Chapter Practice Day guidelines.
2. Securing the proper Class I Chapter insurance coverage through the EAA Risk Management Department (920-426-6106).
3. Coordinating the practice day with the appropriate airport management personnel.
4. Developing a ground operations area where participating airplanes will be staged and where any activities may be held.
5. Designating the aerobatic zone and marking off the practice area as necessary.
6. Overseeing all safety operations, including monitoring any unsafe airplane operations.
7. Scheduling and coordinating the sequence of practice flights.
8. Scheduling and coordinating critiquers for practice flights.

It may be necessary or appropriate for the Practice Day Manager to delegate some of the responsibilities listed.

Practice Pilot Qualifications: Each pilot who participates in an IAC Chapter Practice Day must possess at least a Sport Pilot certificate with rating appropriate for the class of aircraft to be flown (power or glider) and a current medical certificate. Practice pilots must be current members of the IAC.

Aircraft and Equipment Entrance Requirements: Compliance with the following aircraft and equipment documentation and safety standards is required for participation in an IAC Chapter Practice Day:

1. Airworthiness Certificate.
2. Aircraft Registration Certificate.
3. Aircraft operating limitations
4. Aircraft weight and balance.
5. Aircraft must have a current annual inspection.
6. Aircraft liability insurance (evidenced by a certificate of insurance).
7. Aircraft must not have obvious physical damage or potential structural problems as would be indicated by wrinkles in metal or fabric coverings or loose structural members.
8. Complete freedom of movement of the controls.
9. Parachute will be currently packed in accordance with FAA regulations.
10. A radio capable of reception of common VHF frequencies.

Aircraft Structural Standards - Experimental (Amateur-built and Exhibition): The IAC cannot and does not purport or attempt to regulate or require aircraft structural standards for participation in the sport of aerobatics. Each participant is solely responsible for ensuring that his or her aircraft is structurally and mechanically safe and capable of performing whatever maneuver said participant intends to fly.

Aircraft other than Experimental (Acrobatic): Structural standards for other than experimental aircraft are the responsibility of the controlling government agency. Aircraft will not be permitted to fly any maneuvers restricted by the licensing agency or prohibited by the aircraft operating limitations.

Airspace Waivers: Part 91 FARs shall be obeyed at all times. An airspace waiver for the practice area must be obtained and activated if required by government regulation. All practice pilots must read, sign, and comply with the waiver as applicable.

Event Insurance: A Chapter Event Insurance Form must be completed and received by EAA Risk Management 5 business days prior to the practice day. This form may be completed on-line at: <http://www.eaa.org/apps/insurance/>, or a hard copy may also be completed and faxed (920-426-6865) or mailed in. This form is available at: http://www.eaa.org/chapters/admin/chapter_squadron_events.pdf.

A clarification on the wording on this form is necessary for your understanding. The form states that "Aerobatics – Paid or unpaid (anything with respect to waived airspace)" is not covered and is not permitted. This pertains to Chapters hosting a fly-in event only. It does not pertain to IAC Chapter Practice Days. The form contains a

section where all activities that are to be included in the event should be checked and the field titled "IAC Chapter Practice Days" should be checked. If the form does not have a field titled this, please add it as an allowable activity under that section.

Trophies, Awards and Prize Money: Formal trophies, awards and prize money for flying performances are not permitted since an IAC Chapter Practice Day is not a contest and a formal evaluation system (judges, jury) is not in place. However, this does not preclude recognition of practice pilots by certificates or tokens such as medals or patches.

Disqualification of Practice Pilots: Any violation of the safety regulations currently in force and under which the practice day is held will render the offending practice pilot subject to disqualification from further participation in the practice day. In particular, determination by the Practice Day Manager of a violation of any of the following regulations or prohibited activities is grounds for disqualification:

1. Pilot briefing - no practice pilot may fly without a complete pilot briefing.
2. Parachutes - all practice pilots must wear a parachute that is currently certificated and packed according to FAA regulations.
3. Mechanical condition - operation of a practice aircraft with a known mechanical defect that renders the aircraft unairworthy.
4. Reckless flying - any violation of traffic patterns, unscheduled aerobatic maneuvers or operation of an aircraft in an unsafe manner or in such a manner that it would create an unsafe situation or cast an image of recklessness on the IAC. The practice pilot shall not be allowed any subsequent flying except for the removal of his or her aircraft from the practice location.
5. Alcohol - no alcoholic beverages will be permitted at the practice site during the period of practice flying. Use of these beverages by persons associated with the practice day events in ANY capacity is strictly prohibited during this period. Violation of this guideline will impact future IAC Chapter Event Insurance eligibility.
6. Medical condition - sudden, unpredictable deterioration in physical condition which renders further aerobatic flight unsafe shall require immediate cessation of that flight.
7. Drugs - the use of drugs or alcohol in such a manner that could subject the practice pilot to a government violation.
8. Knowingly giving materially false information on any matter to any other person, misconduct, harassment or intimidation of the Practice Day Manager or his or her representative.

Practice Day Briefing: The briefing will be conducted by the Practice Day Manager or his or her designee prior to any practice flying and is mandatory for all participants. The briefing shall include:

1. An overview of practice day events and procedures for scheduling flying period and critiquers.
2. Description of the aerobatic zone and local airport regulations.
3. Description of aircraft starting, servicing and parking areas on the airfield.

4. Starting procedures:
 - a. Taxi, take off and holding procedures.
 - b. Traffic patterns for practice pilots.
 - c. Aborts by practice pilots on the ground and in the air.
5. Radio procedures and frequencies.
6. Verbal review of “disqualification of practice pilots”
7. Signed briefing log by each participant

Aerobatic Zone: The aerobatic box, markings and governing airspace waiver, as applicable will be described during the practice day briefing.

Meteorological Conditions: The minimum weather conditions for aerobatic flights are regulated by the special provisions of the airspace waiver. Weather conditions must enable practice pilots to climb to a minimum altitude of 3500 feet AGL while maintaining a minimum cloud clearance as required by the FARs.

IAC Aerobatic Achievement Awards: The Practice Day Manager should discuss with interested practice day pilots the requirements for various categories of awards and provide appropriate forms for submission by participants. Qualification for achievement awards shall be conducted as specified in Appendix IV of the IAC Official Contest Rules.

Community Relations: Given the increased concerns about noise and housing encroachment around many of the locations used for aerobatic practice, Practice Day Managers are encouraged to engage in proactive outreach to local community representatives including: airport managers, community advocacy groups, FBO owners, etc. with a notification that your Chapter will be hosting a practice session that day and a sense of the time during which this will occur. Example; some Chapters have gone even further than this in an attempt to promote as much community goodwill as possible, including:

- Periodically hosting an “Aerobatic Education Session” to help educate the local community on what aerobatics are all about. This should not be promoted as a “flying event” since this requires different insurance and FAA oversight, but rather a ground-based event focused on educating attendees on what we do with an emphasis on our approach to safety, and our good neighbor policies. *NOTE: Materials for this session may be obtained directly from the IAC.*
- Providing the airport manager (or other key stakeholders) with a summary of flying activity immediately following a practice day so they are well prepared in case someone calls inquiring about our activities. Information such as “number of flights,” “total time in box,” “fuel purchased,” etc., can go a long way in helping local stakeholders advocate for us and separate “fact” from “fiction.”
- Adopt a set of self-imposed “Special Provisions” that augment the ones in your waiver that help to ensure that the manner in which the practice day is conducted is as community friendly as possible. Some examples of self-imposed provisions could include:

- Commitment to fly no earlier, or later than certain times of the day.
- Agreement not to enter the box from certain directions to avoid overflight of houses and minimize noise.
- Mixing up categories so as to avoid having multiple Unlimited flights back to back (which are usually lower and louder).
- Movement around the box (or between multiple aerobatic boxes) to limit the amount of noise in any single area on a given day.
- Agreement not to use the aerobatic box for anything other than critiquing; for all other practicing, encourage flights at high altitudes away from homes.

Summary

At the end of the day, IAC Chapter Practice Days must be safe, should be fun, and most importantly should serve to improve the aerobatic proficiency of IAC members. To accomplish this, IAC Chapter Practice Days must be conducted with the same level of safety, professionalism and attention to detail as an IAC sanctioned contest. Further, IAC Practice Days are an opportunity to reinforce to local communities the IAC's commitment to safety, to inspire others about the sport of aerobatics, and to demonstrate a true commitment to the concept of being a "good neighbor" by employing sensible practices and compromising when practical to ensure we continue to preserve the flying privileges we have.

