

AUSTRALIAN MODEL AIRCRAFT FLYING DISPLAY REQUIREMENTS

There has been debate recently on the above and there is clearly some lack of understanding within the MAAA Membership of the total requirement for the conduct of Model Aircraft Flying Displays.

All Commonwealth Regulations (including Acts of Parliament) will override State Laws, and all of these will take absolute precedence over any MAAA MOP. For Public Displays the Commonwealth Regulation is in CASR 1998 Part 101 and the MAAA cannot vary either the requirement or the responsibility.

Part 101 requires that, in MAAA terms, the Display Director ensures that proper precautions are taken for the safety of the participants and spectators; and the operators participating in the display are competent to carry out each proposed manoeuvre safely. A more detailed extract is in the Attachment.

MOP019 also covers this. An earlier version stated that the Display Directors are responsible for ensuring that all pilots flying in their Displays are of suitable competence, which shall be to a minimum of MAAA Gold Wings standard for radio controlled aircraft pilots. They shall satisfy themselves of the ability of the pilots to perform the manoeuvres that the display aircraft are capable of doing, under the Display conditions, in a safe manner. It then provided advice on how this can be achieved. A more detailed extract is in the Attachment.

It should be noted that Gold Wings standard was not the standard required but was only a minimum, in addition to which the other standards/criteria were mandatory. Display Directors have the responsibility to decide what the proper precautions are, taking into account the nature of the event. In practice Gold Wings standard added nothing but had the potential to complicate the situation. Using the award of Gold Wings as the sole measure of current pilot competency would never satisfy CASA Regulations because:

- (a) the purpose of the Wings scheme is to establish the MAAA acceptable standard to be competent to fly a basic model aircraft flight category without minimum supervision, and provide an incentive for pilots to develop their basic skills to a higher level before, or whilst, pursuing their individual interests.
- (b) it is not subject to reassessment over time.
- (c) it can be achieved with most trainer style aircraft of modest size, speed and capability.
- (d) it gives no indication of a pilot's ability to safely fly a faster, larger, more sensitive or less stable aircraft that may be under his command at the Display.
- (e) it gives no indication of a pilot's capability to fly with the added stress of what could be a large audience.

The current version of MOP019 removes any reference to Gold Wings and just says that the Display Directors are responsible for ensuring that all pilots flying in their Displays are of suitable competence, and for radio controlled aircraft they shall be capable of flying their display aircraft in a competent and safe manner and complete all the display manoeuvres without any loss of control and orientation. They shall satisfy themselves of the ability of the pilots to fly to this standard under the Display conditions. A more detailed extract is in the Attachment.

It also removes the MAAA requirement that the pilot had to be able to perform the manoeuvres that the aircraft was capable of doing. This requirement imposed an impossible standard on normal pilots given the fantastic skill level of the world's best pilots to be able to perform extreme manoeuvres with normal aircraft.

Any words that are written can be subject to differing interpretations. The MAAA MOP's are MAAA documents which the MAAA can consider changing at any time without reference to outside organisations. The MAAA has been advised that if there is an incident, and the interpretation of an MOP is raised, this could only cause questions on insurance cover if the member had not fulfilled the MAAA intent.

The intent of MOP019 remains one of competence to be able to fly the manoeuvres safely. Flying manoeuvres safely is normally interpreted as without loss of control and orientation, as in the safe flying standards specified in MOP015 Permits to Fly. It was never intended that the new words in the MOP would be interpreted as the Display Director having to ensure that every manoeuvre in the Display would actually have to be flown without any loss of control or orientation, simply that the pilots are capable of flying their display manoeuvres safely. Everyone does make occasional errors no matter how competent they are.

The bottom line is that the MAAA has in fact sought to reduce the Public Display pilot standards within MOP019 to bring them into closer alignment with the CASA Regulations. If Display Directors were to follow the same processes for Displays as they committed to undertake under the older version, then they would comply with, or exceed, the requirements of the current version of MOP019.

ATTACHMENT

CASR 1998 Part 101 Extract

101.410 Model flying displays

(1) A person may conduct a model aircraft flying display only in compliance with subregulation (2) or (3).

Penalty: 50 penalty units.

(1A) An offence against subregulation (1) is an offence of strict liability.

*Note For **strict liability**, see section 6.1 of the *Criminal Code*.*

(2) A person complies with this subregulation if the display is conducted:

(a) in an approved area; and

(b) in accordance with the rules and procedures of an approved aviation administration organisation.

Note CASA must publish details of the approval of an area (including any conditions) in NOTAM or on an aeronautical chart — see subregulation 101.030 (5).

(3) A person complies with this subregulation if the display is conducted in accordance with the following conditions and any other conditions imposed by CASA under subregulation (4):

(a) at least 21 days before the display, somebody is nominated as the organiser of the display;

(b) at least 21 days before the display, he or she gives to CASA the following information:

(i) his or her name, address and telephone number;

(ii) the proposed program of flying;

(iii) where the display will be held, and how big the intended flying field is;

(iv) how many spectators are expected, and where they will be;

(c) he or she ensures that:

(i) having regard to the events making up the display, proper precautions are taken for the safety of the participants and spectators; and

(ii) the operators participating in the display are competent to carry out each proposed manoeuvre safely.

Previous version MAAA MOP019 Extract

(The words prior to the change are in bold)

7.9 The Display Director is responsible for ensuring that:

(a) All pilots flying in the Display are of suitable competence, **which shall be to a minimum of MAAA Gold Wings standard for radio controlled aircraft pilots**. This includes all pilots, even if the aircraft is being flown with two transmitters connected with a “buddy cord”.

(b) Aircraft requiring permits have valid documentation.

(c) Aircraft requiring permits are to be flown within the flight envelope approved on their permit.

(d) Only persons endorsed as pilots on the permits of aircraft requiring them are permitted to fly such aircraft at Displays. This includes all pilots, even if the aircraft is being flown with two transmitters connected with a “buddy cord”.

(e) All persons assisting in the running of the Display are fully briefed and aware of safety requirements.

7.10 The Display Director shall satisfy him/herself of the ability of the pilot **to perform the manoeuvres that the display aircraft is capable of doing, under the Display conditions, in a safe manner**. The Display Director will decide on the appropriate means of assessment depending on the scale of the Display. This may range from prior assessment in the case of large formal Displays, to the pre-flight briefing and on-going observation for smaller open events. The Display Director is required to ground any pilot not flying to the required standard on the day.

Current version MAAA MOP019 Extract

(Changed sections only. The words after the change are in bold)

7.9 The Display Director is responsible for ensuring that:

(a) All pilots flying in the Display are of suitable competence, **and for radio controlled aircraft they shall be capable of flying their display aircraft in a competent and safe manner and complete all the display manoeuvres without any loss of control and orientation**. This includes all pilots, even if the aircraft is being flown with two transmitters connected with a “buddy cord”.

7.10 The Display Director shall satisfy him/herself of the ability of the pilots **to fly to the standard of 7.9 (a), under the Display conditions**. The Display Director will decide on the appropriate means of assessment depending on the scale of the Display. This may range from prior assessment in the case of large formal Displays, to the pre-flight briefing and on-going observation for smaller open events. The Display Director is required to ground any pilot not flying to the required standard on the day.