



Bylaws Recommendations for AMA Charter Clubs

What is it all about? Why is AMA requiring clubs to have bylaws?

“Model Aviation is about having fun, and we all get along great! We don’t need bylaws!” 99% of the time, that statement holds true. For the remaining one percent, problems arise when club bylaws are poorly written or do not exist at all, leaving the club and AMA in a quandary. Sometimes, the problems stem from issues between club members and at other times between the club and outside groups. Experience is a great teacher, and in 2000/2001 AMA was involved in representing several clubs concerning some unique legal issues and is adding some specific items to this recommendation.

Although nobody ever anticipates any issues, it is crucial for clubs to have bylaws and be prepared. This puts the club in a better position to handle its own business and give AMA an easier way to represent clubs when and if the need should arise.

AMA is not attempting to tell clubs how to run their day-to-day operations. However, we are sharing our experiences and lessons learned in order that your clubs may operate more efficiently and effectively.

Bylaws - What are they?

Merriam Webster's collegiate dictionary defines bylaw as "a rule adopted by an organization chiefly for the government of its members and the regulation of its officers."

Organizational bylaws usually deal with such items as name, purpose, membership, dues, officers and their duties, executive committee, safety matters, meeting place and time, order of business, and how to amend the bylaws. If the local AMA club has an issue unique to the local area this issue should be addressed within the bylaws. All bylaws should provide a way for them to be amended. Note that the Bylaws of the Academy of Model Aeronautics, Inc. can be found on the AMA website, and Article XV addresses amending of the bylaws.

Bylaws cannot include every item of concern. Some of these items can be dealt with on an as-needed basis in the regular meetings. If the club membership believes an item should be included in the bylaws, then this should be accomplished according to the rules as stated in the bylaws.

It is good practice to review your bylaws on a regular basis and, if necessary, add and/or modify articles.

On the next few pages, you will find an example of how your bylaws could be structured. Note that we added some generic sample language, that would need to be updated based on your club's specific structure and circumstances. Some of these articles may not be applicable to your club, so it is okay to skip over them. It is also acceptable to add elements that are specific for your club.

One item you want to spend some extra time outlining is your voting procedure. For example, consider defining the minimum number of voting members who must be present at a meeting (quorum), who is eligible to vote, whether you want to allow for absentee voting, or virtual voting.

AMA *strongly recommends* adding the following articles verbatim: Article 3 C-F (Resignation, Termination, Expulsion, and Reinstatement), Article 9 F (Dissolution of Club), Article 11 (Grievance Procedures – Safety-related complaint), as well as the Club Grievance Form. You may also consider adding grievance procedures for acts or omissions, which may not be flight or safety related, but could still have a detrimental impact to the club or to model aviation.

Let's go, have fun and fly safely!

**Bylaws for [insert your club name]
as approved/amended on [insert date bylaws were approved or amended]**

Article 1: Name

- A. Club Name:
USA Model airplane club
- B. Location:
Anytown, USA

Article 2: Purpose

To further the sport/hobby of model aviation.

Article 3: Membership

- A. Qualifications:
AMA membership required.
- B. Dues:
Dues are \$00.00 per year for open members,
\$00.00 for youth and senior citizens.
- C. Resignation:
Any member in good standing may resign his or her membership by giving written notice to the club.
- D. Termination
If any member ceases to have the qualification necessary for membership in the AMA, his or her membership in the club shall thereby terminate, subject to reinstatement upon restoration of eligibility.
- E. Expulsion
This section provides for enforcement of the safety rules that are related to flying activities or any other unacceptable behavior by an individual member or members. Any individual may be expelled from membership from the club by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the total votes cast if in the officers' determination, such individual willfully commits any act or omission which is a violation of any of the terms of these bylaws, or the Rules of the AMA, or which is detrimental the club, the AMA, or to model aviation.
- F. Reinstatement
A two-thirds vote of the membership is required for reinstatement to the club.

Article 4: Officers

- A. *Elected Officers*
President, Vice- President, Secretary, Treasurer
- B. *Term of Office*
Officers are elected annually
- C. *Duties*
President shall preside at meetings, VP shall preside in the absence of the president, Secretary records minutes, and Treasurer handles club funds.
- D. *Appointed Officers*
Safety coordinator, committee chairman, program chairman.
- E. *Vacancies*
Officer vacancies are to be filled by majority vote of the remaining officers.

Article 5: Meetings

- A. *Regular Meetings*
Regular meetings are held on a monthly basis.
- B. *Special Meetings*
Notice of special meetings will be emailed/mailed to all members at least 7 days but not more than 14 days before the meeting.

Article 6: Record Keeping

All records are passed on when new officers are elected.

Article 7: Committees

Standing committees: Safety, Membership, Grievance, etc.
Special committees: tbd

Article 8: Nominations, Elections, and Recall

- A. *Nominations*
Nominations for officer position can be made from the floor or by mail.
- B. *Elections*
Elections are held at a regularly scheduled meeting.
- C. *Recall*
Elected officers can be removed from office before completion of the term by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership.

Article 9: Miscellaneous Provisions

- A. Robert's Rules
All meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules.
- B. Fiscal Year
The club's fiscal year starts on January 1 and ends on December 31.
- C. Social Media
- D. Club Logo
- E. Standing Rules
- F. Youth Programs/Activities
The club will obtain criminal background checks on any individual interacting directly with children or minors as part of any club youth programs/activities.
- G. Dissolution of Club
The duration of the club shall be perpetual. The club may be dissolved with the approval of two-thirds vote of the membership. Any remaining assets will be donated to non-profit charity.

Article 10: Amendment of Bylaws

- A. Proposed
Any club member can propose changes. Amendment proposals should be submitted to bylaw's committee chair.
- B. Approval
- C. Voting

Article 11: Grievance Procedures

- A. Safety-related complaints
The grievance procedure provides a mechanism to enforce existing safety rules by providing a progressive disciplinary system when needed. Although most complaints can be resolved informally, if a complaint is serious or cannot be resolved informally, the matter should be referred to the safety coordinator/committee for its consideration by means of a grievance form to be filled out and turned into the safety coordinator/committee chair. At least one witness is required to sign the grievance form.

The safety coordinator/committee shall use its judgment in carrying out action on the following:

- a. *A grievance form will be filled out and turned into the safety coordinator/committee chair. At least one witness is required. The safety coordinator/committee chair will investigate and consider viewpoints of both, complainants and accused. If the grievance is validated, the following disciplinary actions will be implemented:*
- b. *First Violation*
Complainant's name will be disclosed. A verbal reprimand will be given to the accused by the safety coordinator/committee chair, and this will be recorded in the club records.
- c. *Second Violation*
Complainant's name will be disclosed. The accused has the right to a written rebuttal, to be reviewed by the club safety coordinator/committee. If the committee so decides, the flying privileges of the accused will be suspended for thirty (30) days. Written notice of this shall be issued and a copy published in the club newsletter.
- d. *Third Violation*
Safety coordinator/committee will notify the accused in writing and the club members via the club newsletter that the club will vote on the expulsion of the accused at the next meeting. club members eligible for voting who cannot attend the meeting may vote via virtual ballot. Said expulsion will last for a one-year minimum. A member may be expelled from the club only upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the total votes cast. Voting will be by secret ballot at a regular monthly meeting or through a secure online ballot. The expelled member may reapply for membership after the expiration of the expulsion time-period.
- e. *The three actions will not be enforced unless the three violations are accumulated within a period of two consecutive years.*
- f. *Any member receiving a grievance, who directs any retaliation action against the person filing said grievance, will be subject to immediate expulsion from the club. This includes, but is not limited to threats, intimidation,*

physical harm, intentional equipment damage, or any other action deemed to be retaliatory by the club officers.

- B. Non-safety related complaints
Complaints need to be presented to any club officer or grievance committee member.
 - a. Review/Investigation
 - b. Disciplinary Actions (not addressed in Article 3)
 - i. *First Violation*
 - ii. *Second Violation*
 - iii. *Third Violation*
 - c. Appeal Process

Club Grievance Form

Date: _____

Time: _____

Nature of Violation:

Complainant's Signature: _____

Witness' Signature: _____

Additional Witnesses (not required):

