

# Academy of Model Aeronautics

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MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2009  
APRIL 1 - SEPTEMBER 14



## Academy of Model Aeronautics Position Statement on ARC Recommendations Document

### Overview.

For the past 12 months, the Academy of Model Aeronautics has taken a proactive role in representing our membership's model aviation interests and protecting your flying rights by working closely with the FAA on an Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC). The purpose of the ARC was to draft recommendations for regulatory policy for the operation of small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS).

The week of May 10, 2009, the FAA released the ARC recommendations, and AMA's goal is to keep our membership informed about the progress in the rulemaking process. Please understand that these ARC recommendations are just that: proposed recommendations—not policy or federal regulation.

The FAA ARC comprised a diverse stakeholder group representing the unmanned aircraft industry, user groups, and other participants in the National Airspace System (NAS). Rich Hanson, an AMA member whose position is AMA Government and Regulatory Affairs Representative, served on the ARC. He is the designated AMA representative who is devoted to working with the FAA on protecting all AMA members' model aviation interests and flying rights.

The primary objective of the ARC was to make recommendations for the creation of new regulation for the operation of commercial and public-use small UAS in the National Airspace. At issue is the integration of these sUAS in the National Airspace without causing delays, capacity reduction, or placing all current airspace users at increased risk.

### AMA President Dave Mathewson's Response to the ARC Recommendations Document.

On March 26, 2009, the ARC completed its work and submitted its recommendations to the FAA. In anticipation of the release of the recommendations, the June issue of *Model Aviation* features AMA's position regarding the recommendations and AMA President Dave Mathewson's detailed explanation of the rulemaking process. The text of the June "President's Perspective" can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

To help keep our membership informed about the rulemaking progress and the latest developments, we have created a special section on the AMA Web site for you. In addition, you will be able to post questions and comments. While there may be other sources of ARC

information available to you, the only true source for accurate information is *Model Aviation* and AMA Web site.

### **Read the Complete ARC Recommendations Document.**

The portions of the ARC recommendations pertaining to model aviation can be found on the AMA Web site by clicking [here](#), and the complete ARC document can be found by going to the unmanned aircraft portion of the FAA Web site at [www.faa.gov/uas](http://www.faa.gov/uas).

### **Understanding the ARC Recommendations and AMA's Position.**

As you read through this material, it's important to keep in mind that these are the initial ARC recommendations—not proposed regulatory language. These ARC recommendations are only the first step in a relatively long regulatory process. AMA's position and exceptions to the recommendations can be found in the yellow highlighted text titled "**Alternative View and Alternative Rationale.**"

The FAA's philosophy to its oversight of the aeromodeling activity is to regulate model aviation by exempting it from regulation, then referring to an accepted community-based safety program, such as the safety program established and recognized by the AMA.

The ARC addressed this philosophy by creating a two-path approach. One path addresses model operations conducted under an accepted community-based program. The other path refers to modeling activities that occur outside of such a program. In the document, Section 2 creates the first path and Section 3 addresses the second path.

As proposed in the ARC recommendations under Section 2, the AMA and other modeling organizations would be afforded the opportunity to present their safety programs to the FAA for approval and acceptance. Once approved, members of the AMA would be allowed to conduct modeling operations in accordance with the AMA guidelines. It is AMA's expressed goal to allow the modeling enthusiasts to continue to operate and enjoy the hobby in much the same way they have in the past, and it is AMA's intent to present its safety program to the FAA for approval and acceptance prior to the conclusion of the rulemaking process.

AMA has in place a workgroup charged with compiling and formatting AMA's current model aviation safety guidelines and formulating these guidelines into a comprehensive safety program. To date, this group has made excellent progress in identifying the issues, collecting data, conducting risk analysis, and developing an outline for the end product.

Again, it is important to remember that the ARC recommendations are the first step in an extensive rulemaking process. Federal rulemaking follows well-defined, orderly procedures. During this period, the AMA will work directly with the FAA in seeking acceptance of its safety program and in working toward reasonable solutions to our concerns. When the FAA completes its work, which includes drafting regulatory language, conducting a safety assessment, and

performing an extensive intra-agency and interagency review, a final set of proposed regulations will be developed.

The proposed regulations are expected to be released in the Federal Register as a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) sometime during the second quarter of 2010. The NPRM provides a period of public comment, during which the AMA and its members must stand together and be counted. The AMA will notify all members at the appropriate time.

The AMA will continue to keep its members apprised of the situation and our progress during the rulemaking period. Information will be available on the AMA Web site and will be published in *Model Aviation*.