

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MODEL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION



Operations Manual

POLICY ON SHARING OF AIRSPACE AVAILABLE

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This document forms part of the SAMAA Manual of Procedures. It is to be used by SAMAA Members and Registered Clubs in all activities associated with the flying of model aircraft in the RSA.

1. Policy

On safety grounds, the SAMAA does not support the operation of any type of model aircraft in close proximity to, and/or in the same immediate airspace as Hang Gliders and Paragliders.

2. Rationale

The difference in flying speed between models and piloted gliders is considerable and can easily lead to misjudgement and a collision risk. Model aircraft typically operate at much higher flying speed than hang gliders and Paragliders, making it difficult to establish a set pattern without conflict. Additionally, operating in close proximity is made more difficult by the fact that the model aircraft pilot remains on the ground, making it more difficult for the pilot to judge the distance of his model from other aircraft.

These reasons mean that compliance with CAR Part 94 cannot be guaranteed.

This states that:

- A person must not operate an unmanned aircraft in a way that creates a hazard to another aircraft, another person or property.

However the SAMAA recognises that good soaring sites are usually suitable for, and open to both hang gliders, Paragliders and model aircraft. Since conditions at each site are different it is recommended that if SAMAA Members use a slope that is also used by piloted gliders then their club must have discussions with the local Hang Gliding Club regarding methods to share the site. These should include physical separation to a safe distance, or separate flying times. These could be specific to the conditions at the particular site.

Difficulties may arise in achieving this and in this case advice from the local Government should be obtained. If the issue cannot be settled locally and the SAMAA Management Committee Members believe they have a substantive case, the SAMAA is prepared to hold discussions with the Hang Gliding Association of South Africa to resolve it.

It must be fully understood that if manned aircraft are using the site, and no sharing agreement has been reached, then model aircraft shall not use the site.

KFN