

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN MODEL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION**



Operations Manual

**POLICY ON MOBILE PHONES AT FLYING FIELD**

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**PO 12**

To Management Committee  
and SIGS for Approval

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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. Purpose**

This Policy implements the recommendations of the SAMAA Frequency Sub-committee and is accepted by the SAMAA to minimise the risk from the use of mobile phones at model flying fields.

**2. Introduction**

The SAMAA Frequency Sub-Committee has confirmed that there is sufficiently well recorded instances of mobile phones affecting model radio control transmitters by corrupting the radiated signals and also modifying the stored memory in computer radios, to make their unrestricted use at model flying sites an unacceptable risk.

It is also understood that the close proximity signal strength from a mobile phone exceeds the designed Electro Magnetic Interference (EMI) specifications of at least one radio manufacturer and is identified by the radio manufacturer as a significant risk.

**3. Definitions**

**SAMAA** South Africa Model Aircraft Association  
**Mobile Phone** Portable, or cell phone

**4. Policy**

The SAMAA strongly recommends that: -

- All mobile phones be banned at radio controlled model flying fields at the following locations and in areas between them: -
  - i. The transmitter pound
  - ii. The pit area
  - iii. The flight line
- High power phones with an add-on amplifier are not to be used within 30 metres of operating aircraft at transmitter

**5. Guidance**

- (a) With the widespread use of mobile phones and the benefits that they bring for general use and also for emergencies, it is not the intention to unreasonably restrict their use at model flying sites.

- (b) It is anticipated that the layout of most flying fields will allow convenient areas to be available, such as public viewing areas or the car park, where mobile phones can be operated safely and in accordance with this Policy.
- (c) Consistent with the intent of this recommendation, a buffer zone should exist between where mobile phones are allowed and the location of any radio control transmitters in the transmitter pound or pit area. It is recommended that distance should be a minimum of two (2) metres.
- (d) As each field layout is different, it is up to the local club management to decide how this policy should be actually and clearly, implemented to ensure that it complies with these recommendation in a practical manner.
- (e) Mobile phones that are switched on radiate at regular intervals to maintain identification with the base station, not just when a call is in progress.
- (f) Due to the difficulty in identifying whether a mobile phone is switched on or not, it is recommended that the ban apply to all mobile phones being carried in or near the locations specified in Item 4 of this policy, and not just those that are switched on.