

We now have a signed Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the St. Louis Airport ATC authority

What does this allow us to do? We can now fly to a maximum altitude of 2000 feet Above Ground Level (AGL).

How does this affect how we fly? There are a few restrictions to be aware of that are defined below. Generally it will have no effect on our flying other than allowing us to go to higher altitude. We do NOT have to, and should not notify the FAA or airport when we fly. Just go fly whenever you please. However, please be aware of the need to obey all safety rules of the AMA and our field safety rules.

What are the restrictions? The three most important issues of concern to the FAA in authorizing this LOA are: Safety, Safety and Safety. The primary approach to our safely sharing the airspace with full scale aircraft is See and Avoid. That means both we see and avoid them, and they see us and can avoid. However, since we are much smaller and more maneuverable than they are, the bulk of the See and Avoid responsibility has to fall on us.

There are two important AMA safety documents. The AMA Safety Handbook (Document 100, <https://www.modelaircraft.org/sites/default/files/documents/100.pdf>) and the AMA See and Avoid Guidance (Document 540-D, <https://www.modelaircraft.org/system/files/documents/540-D.pdf>) Please make sure you are operating within the letter of both documents at all times. Our club field safety rules make up the third important document (<https://www.phantomflyersrc.com/current-news/>). What follows is what is new with the LOA.

1. Weather. This was already addressed by the recent addition of rule 42 that was passed by the club at the March 2022 meeting.
42. Prior to flying, pilots must verify visibility to be a minimum of 3 miles and the lowest reported cloud level to be at least 500 feet above the highest altitude to be flown. These minimums are based on the official reported conditions at Lambert St. Louis International Airport. An accepted source for these conditions is the KSTL Meteorological Encoded Terminal Area Report (METAR) available from multiple sources including on the home page of the club website ([phantomflyersrc.com](https://www.phantomflyersrc.com)). An alternate source is the Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS) recorded data which can be obtained at 314-890-4790.
2. No night time flying. Flying is permitted from civil sunrise to civil sunset. Again the issue is supporting See and Avoid.
3. "Spill out" refers to a requirement on us to immediately report to the FAA if we lose control of an aircraft resulting in a flyaway. Our interpretation of flyaway means the aircraft was last seen flying stably leaving our field airspace in a manner where it is not seen to come down. If we lose control and we see the aircraft impact the ground (or disappear into the corn), that is not a flyaway and is not reportable. Here is the requirement for reporting.

Phantom Flyers R/C Club must immediately notify St. Louis Air Traffic Control Tower

(STL) at (314) 890-4727 and St. Louis TRACON (T75) at (314) 890-1018 in the event of a lost link, fly-away or operational area spill-out that may affect manned aircraft operations.

(1) Information in case of a fly-away or spill-out

(a) Location of aircraft

(b) Size of aircraft (weight, length, width)

(c) Direction of Flight

(d) Altitude

Items 2 and 3 will likely require additions to the field safety rules. We will review the LOA in detail and determine what requirements of the LOA require field safety rule changes and/or posting of information at the field. Changes will be brought before the club at the May meeting to allow the required rule change notification to be completed a week ahead of a vote.

Please note. The above changes and restrictions are in effect now. Please abide by them. The field rule changes that we will propose are the paperwork catching up to reality.

One question that has come up is, how does this affect the aircraft identification/altitude reporting requirement that the FAA is pursuing. The answer is they are completely separate issues with no effect on each other.

I wanted to get this out in time for the April Carrier Wave. I realize that it does not answer all questions. That will take time. And need to have those questions raised by all of you.

Ed White

Secretary