



WHAT DO I NEED TO FLY HERE?— PART 3

By Lucas Rodden, Government Affairs Manager | lucasr@modelaircraft.org

IN PREVIOUS COLUMNS, I explored what it takes for legal compliance, as well as neighbor relations, to fly in different combinations of airspace and land. In all cases, we will assume that the pilot has completed the baseline requirements of FAA registration, The Recreational UAS Safety Test (TRUST), and Remote ID, and is following current safety rules and applicable regulations.

In one of my final examples, I'll look at the common scenario of flying on public land within controlled airspace to examine what is required of a pilot before operating.

Scenario: Public Land, Controlled Airspace

Let's say that our pilot wants to fly at a local park. There's plenty of unoccupied space and the park is open to it, but the land sits within "controlled" airspace (typically Class B, C, D, or variations of E). What does our pilot need to consider before flying?

Within controlled airspace, the FAA has preset altitudes inside of a "grid" that can be viewed on a number of airspace maps (see the example image from the FAA UAS Facility map).



Before navigating the airspace, the pilot needs to ensure that flights are allowed within the public space. Some parks might require permits through park offices, while some rely on verbal permission and others might restrict takeoff/landing altogether. Once permission is obtained through local channels, we can consider what the airspace requires.

Because our pilot is in controlled airspace, prior approval is needed before flying. In this case, the most accessible solution would be to use a Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability, or LAANC. This is an FAA system that lets you submit a request to operate and receive nearly instant approval up to a preset altitude. There are multiple publicly available apps that allow you to do this, although AMA members receive access to UASidekick through an AMA member benefits partnership. A link to UASidekick is in the "Sources" section at the end of this column.

Now that the pilot has received permission from the land management and an approved LAANC request, it's time to fly! Within each LAANC approval app, you should have a clear indication of the altitude limit. For example, the area in the image could only receive permission to operate 200 feet above ground level.

Complexities can arise with local relationships, but the basic permissions needed in this case are very clear cut.

Permissions to Consider

- *Permission to operate within a public space:* Varies widely for each city; check with local parks or established clubs.
- *LAANC authorization for controlled airspace:* Gives low-altitude permission to operate within controlled airspace. The FAA website's list of LAANC apps is listed in "Sources."

Additional Notes

- LAANC is ideal for last-minute flights, traveling, solo pilots, and small groups. For long-term permissions and other benefits, such as potential altitude extensions, an Airspace Authorization application would be required. These are typically what AMA clubs use for their home fields and frequently used event spaces. They must be applied for through AMA. Reach out to amagov@modelaircraft.org if you have any questions.

As usual, obtaining the local permissions first often takes the longest because there won't be a standard path from city to city. Once it's completed, however, obtaining airspace permission through LAANC is extremely simple.

I've so far covered combinations of private and public land with uncontrolled and controlled airspaces and what is needed to operate in those spaces. In my next and final installment, I'll summarize the knowledge, touch on questions from readers, and address other complicating factors.

Once this series is complete, the articles will be adapted into a reference guide and made available on the AMA website. If you are unsure about your local requirements, please reach out to lucasr@modelaircraft.org to discuss nuances. The compliance items listed here are not comprehensive in all scenarios and should be viewed as guidelines for troubleshooting.

To remain current with the most recent government-related news, regularly visit the AMA Government Affairs blog. If you have any further questions or concerns, contact the Government Affairs department at (765) 287-1256 or amagov@modelaircraft.org.

SOURCES:

AMA Government Affairs Blog
amablog.modelaircraft.org/amagov

UASidekick
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Approved LAANC UAS Service Suppliers
FAA
faa.gov/uas/getting_started/laanc#approved