

Burning Man's 2015 Policy

Remote Control Aircraft in and around Black Rock City (RCBRC)

Introduction:

The rising popularity of remote control (RC) aircraft including: fixed wing planes, helicopters, multicopters aka “drones” or unmanned aerial vehicles, presents many challenges at the Burning Man event. Black Rock City, LLC’s (BRC’s) mission is for RC activity to proceed in the safest manner possible, while also respecting the privacy rights of participants.

Like mutant vehicles, BRC regulates all RC aircraft and requires that they be operated responsibly, and subject to restricted fly zones and other rules of operation. BRC has an established RC community, which has stepped forward to collaborate on creating rules and recommendations based upon The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations and the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) safety code.

The FAA requires all operators of RC aircraft flying within 5 miles of an airport to notify that airport of their operations. Virtually all of Black Rock City is within 5 miles of 88NV, Black Rock City Municipal Airport. So, all RC operators must register and follow all policies, rules, restrictions and conditions stated in this document and communicated at the Event in RCBRC briefings. Failure to comply can lead to confiscation of the aircraft, BLM fines, and/or removal from the event.

Restrictions include, but are not limited to:

1. Flying sufficient distance away from populated (city blocks, theme camps, etc.), low noise tolerance (the Temple!) or other sensitive areas (including Burns and the Man)
2. Avoid flying near spectators until aircraft tested/flown previously.
3. Flying no higher than 400 feet above ground.
4. If within 5 miles of an airport: notification of the airport operator. (Registration satisfies this requirement.)
5. Avoid flying in proximity of, and give right-of-way to, full-scale aircraft.

Rules of Operation

1. Maximum altitude allowed per FAA is 400 feet above ground.
2. Only visual line of sight flying per FAA, no long distance flying.
3. No First Person View flying (flying based upon video stream not direct sight).
4. Secure a safe place to take off, land, and emergency land.
5. Fly when possible with a spotter to help control on-lookers, etc.
6. 100 feet horizontal separation away from all perimeter fences / trash fence.
7. 100 feet horizontal separation away from EMS, Police, Fire Department vehicles and their camp locations.
8. 100 feet horizontal separation away from all heavy equipment and work crews.
9. 100 feet horizontal separation away from all ground vehicles, artwork, sculptures, guidewires, kites, tethered aviation, etc.
10. Avoid flying over or close to people, AMA recommendations are horizontal separation of 25 feet at least.
11. Immediately land if skydivers are seen overhead. You may resume flight after they have landed.
12. No operating RC aircraft while intoxicated. If you are deemed intoxicated to the point that you are "illegal to drive" you may not fly.
13. No use of ham bands including 433, 600, 900 MHz and 1.3 GHz unless a current Technician, General, or Amateur Extra License is shown.
14. No amplified systems, for example: Dragonlink.
15. If a pilot is acting in an unsafe manner either law enforcement or the Black Rock Rangers have the authority to confiscate the controller/transmitter and transfer it to the Safety Officer and RCBRC notified.

16. If a crashed craft is found it will be transferred to the Safety Officer and RCBRC notified.
17. Aircraft confiscated for flying unsafely, recklessly or in violation of rules will be held by the Safety Officer.

Flying Prohibited During The Following Conditions

1. During strong winds
2. During dust storms
3. From a moving vehicle
4. Flights at night unless equipped with adequate navigation lights per AMA rules.

Flying Prohibited At The Following Locations and Times

1. Entry and exit roads leading into BRC
2. Center camp
3. Esplanade
4. Inside The Man safety ring
5. The Man after it closes for pyrotechnical set-up
6. Temple and Man Burns
7. Airport restrictions
8. Incident Command (Law Enforcement & Emergency Services Area)
9. Flying/hovering over the city (2:00-10:00/Esplanade-Last street)
10. Inside of or from the top/side of any architecture/structures

No Flying At Or Near BRC Municipal Airport (88NV)

- No flying at 88NV including the 88NV camping area, terminal, ramp/tie-down, and runways unless direct face-to-face permission is given by the Air Commander, Airport Safety Officer, or Runway Manager during airport operation hours (dawn-twilight).
- No flying from the last named street that surrounds BRC over walk-in campground to the trash fence/perimeter from the radials of 2:00 to 6:00 (dependent upon location of airport being at 5:00 or 5:30) during airport operation hours (dawn-twilight) unless direct face-to-face permission is given by the Air Commander, Airport Safety Officer, or Runway Manager.

Other Conditions

Please be aware that there are other rules and laws that may affect operations of an RC aircraft. For example, using an RC aircraft to photograph or videotape someone without their permission or for commercial purposes is not authorized under BRC's Ticket Terms and Conditions. Intentionally or negligently injuring persons or property with an RC aircraft could lead to criminal assault and or battery charges. Interfering with airport operations is a federal crime. Be mindful of all laws, rules and regulations when operating an RC aircraft, and use common sense. If RC aircraft are operated unsafely then they will be subject to further regulation and restrictions in the future. Help make BRC a place where RC aircraft are a valued part of the community.

Registration:

- Registration is mandatory and on-line; registration will be limited.
- On-playa briefing, completed pre-registration form and craft registration is required.
- Registration constitutes participant's agreement to abide by all RCBRC policies and rules and to be financially responsible for any harm or damage pilot or RC aircraft/drone may cause during the Burning Man Event.
- Burning Man has the right to confiscate RC aircraft/drone found to be in violation of any RCBRC, FAA, or AMA policy, rules or guidelines.

Contact Information:

1. BRC Website information:

<http://burningman.org/event/black-rock-city-guide/drones/>

2. BRC Drone Contact:

gabe.kearney@burningman.org

REFERENCES / LINKS

- **Academy of Model Aeronautics website:** <http://www.modelaircraft.org/>
- **Academy of Model Aeronautics Safety Code:**
<http://www.modelaircraft.org/files/105.pdf>
- **Remote Control Aerial Photography Association RCAPA Recommended Operational Guidelines** <http://rcapa.net/guidelines>