

Catalyst Collective 2025 Policy for Remote Control Aircraft at Burning Flipside

Introduction:

The rising popularity of remote control (RC) aircraft including fixed wing planes, helicopters, multicopters aka “drones” or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), presents many challenges at [Burning Flipside](#). [Catalyst Collective](#)’s policy is to allow limited RC activity in keeping with the privacy and safety of all participants. The Communications operational area is responsible for coordinating drone activity and can be contacted at communications-af@burningflipside.org for any questions.

Like mutant vehicles, Catalyst Collective registers all RC aircraft and requires that they be operated responsibly, and subject to restricted fly zones and other rules of operation, just like Art Cars. These rules and restrictions are based on those created by the well-established RC community at Black Rock City, which are in turn 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 (8km) of an airport to notify that airport of their operations. An FAA registered airstrip and municipal hangar. All RC operators must register and follow all policies, rules, restrictions, and conditions stated in this document and communicated at the Event.

Restrictions include, but are not limited to:

1. Flying sufficient distance away from populated (city blocks, theme camps, etc.), low noise tolerance Safety HQ, or other sensitive areas (including Burns and structures).
2. Avoid flying near spectators until aircraft have been tested/flown previously.
3. Flying no higher than 400 feet (122m).
4. Because we are within 5 miles (8km) of an airport, the airport operator must be notified. Registration satisfies this requirement.
5. Avoid flying in proximity of, and give right-of-way to, full-scale aircraft.

Rules of Operation

1. Any RC aircraft over 10 inches (250mm) in the longest dimension, those carrying a camera, or those flying more than 100 feet (30m) from the operator, must check in at Safety HQ before flying.
2. Maximum altitude allowed per FAA is 400 feet (122m) above ground.
3. Only visual line of sight flying per FAA, no long-distance flying.
4. No First Person View (FPV) flying (flying based upon video stream not direct sight).
5. Secure a safe place to take off, land, and emergency land.
6. Fly when possible with a spotter to help control on-lookers, etc.
7. Keep 100 feet (30m) horizontal separation away from all Flipside property borders.
8. Keep 100 feet (30m) horizontal separation away from PETS, Rangers, Sanctuary, and Fire Department vehicles and their camp locations.
9. Keep 100 feet (30m) horizontal separation away from all heavy equipment and work crews.

10. Keep 100 feet (30m) horizontal separation away from all ground vehicles, artwork, sculptures, guidewires, kites, tethered aviation, etc.
11. Avoid flying over or close to people, AMA recommendations are horizontal separation of 25 feet (8m) at least.
12. Immediately land if skydivers are seen overhead. You may resume flight after they have landed.
13. No operating RC aircraft while intoxicated. If you are deemed intoxicated to the point that you are "illegal to drive" you may not fly.
14. 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.
15. No amplified systems, for example: Dragonlink.
16. If a pilot is acting in an unsafe manner, either law enforcement or the Burning Flipside Rangers have the authority to confiscate the controller/transmitter and transfer it to Lost and Found and Catalyst Collective will be notified.
17. If a crashed craft is found it will be transferred to Lost and Found and Catalyst Collective will be notified.
18. Aircraft confiscated for flying unsafely, recklessly or in violation of rules will be held at Lost and Found until the end of the event or the participant/pilot permanently departs from the event.
19. Unclaimed aircraft will be subject to ordinary Lost & Found procedures of Burning Flipside. Catalyst Collective is not responsible for unclaimed aircraft.

Exceptions to these rules can be made for shows scheduled in advance with and agreed to in writing by 2025 Art Drone Points of Contact (Huckleberry and Ronin) with full Safety team approval and support.

Flying Prohibited During the Following Conditions

1. During strong winds.
2. During dust storms.
3. Inside of or from the top/side of any architecture/structures.
4. From a moving vehicle.
5. Hovering over people, personal living space (tents, RVs, shower stalls, fenced off camps, etc).
6. Night flights must have adequate navigation lights per AMA rules.

Flying Prohibited at the Following Locations

1. Entry and exit roads leading into Burning Flipside.
2. Inside The Effigy safety ring.
3. The Effigy after it closes for pyrotechnical set-up.
4. Incident Command (Law Enforcement & Emergency Services Area).

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 Catalyst Collective'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 Burning Flipside a place where RC aircraft are a valued part of the community.

Registration:

- Registration is mandatory.
- Registration constitutes a participant's agreement to abide by all Catalyst Collective policies and rules and to be financially responsible for any harm or damage a pilot or RC aircraft/drone may cause during Burning Flipside.
- Catalyst Collective has the right to confiscate RC aircraft/drone found to be in violation of any Catalyst Collective, FAA, or AMA policy, rules, or guidelines.
- Aircraft confiscated for lack of registration will be held at Lost and Found until registration is presented.
- Aircraft confiscated for flying unsafely, recklessly or in violation of rules will be held at Lost and Found until the end of the event or the participant/pilot permanently departs from the event.

Unclaimed aircraft will be subject to ordinary Lost & Found procedures of Flipside. Catalyst Collective is not responsible for unclaimed aircraft.

Print Legal Name, Signature, and Signing Date

REFERENCES / LINKS

- Burning Man's 2024 Drone Policy:
<https://burningman.org/wp-content/uploads/3.5-Drone-Policy-2024.pdf>
- Academy of Model Aeronautics website: <https://www.modelaircraft.org/>
- Academy of Model Aeronautics Safety Code:
<https://www.modelaircraft.org/system/files/documents/105.pdf>