



Guide to Starting an Aviation Drone Exploring Post or Club

This guide outlines the essential steps to start a Drone Aviation Exploring club and/or post. It includes FAA regulations, safety requirements, training, registration, and Exploring program setup.

Steps to Start a Drone Aviation Exploring Post and/or Club

Step 1: Research

- Conduct career interest surveys to identify youth interested in drone aviation.
- Identify local partners and professionals in drone-related industries.

Step 2: Leadership: Partner with a Host Organization

- Secure a business or community organization willing to sponsor the club or post.
- Match organizational resources with youth interests.
- Complete required paperwork:
 - o Memorandum of Understanding.
 - o New Post/Club Application.
 - o Adult Applications.
- Ensure leaders complete required training:
 - o Safeguarding Youth.
 - o Explorer Leader Training.

Step 3: Program Setup

- Define program goals: STEM education, career exposure, FAA certification.
- Choose a curriculum that includes:
 - o Hands-on drone activities.
 - o Safety training.
 - o Career exploration.
- Determine age groups:
 - o Clubs (ages 10–14).
 - o Posts (ages 14–20).

Step 4: Participation

- Host an open house or recruitment event.
- Register youth and adult leaders with Exploring.
- Begin regular meetings with structured activities and mentorship.
- Ensure all drones are FAA registered (if applicable) and TRUST certificates are obtained.
- Track participation and progress using Exploring tools.

Additional Resources and Support

FAA Rules and Regulations for Drone Operation

- All drones over 0.55 lbs. (250 grams) must be registered with the FAA.
- Recreational flyers must pass the TRUST (The Recreational UAS Safety Test).
- Remote ID is required for most drones and must be broadcast during flight.
- Drones must be flown below 400 feet in uncontrolled airspace and away from airports.
- Indoor drone operations are not regulated by the FAA but must follow safety guidelines.
- Operators must be at least 13 years old to register a drone.
- Club members under the age of 13 are permitted to operate drones under supervision, in accordance with FAA guidelines for recreational and educational use.

TRUST Training Requirements

- All recreational drone pilots must pass the TRUST test.
- The test is free and available online through FAA-approved administrators.
- Scouting America is an FAA-approved administrator of the TRUST (The Recreational UAS Safety Test) training.
- All youth and adult participants must complete the training prior to drone operation.
- Access the training at: <https://www.scouting.org/the-recreational-uas-safety-test/>
- Upon completion, pilots receive a certificate that must be carried during flight.

Drone Registration Process

- Register drones at the FAA DroneZone website (<https://faadronezone.faa.gov>).
- Provide personal and drone information including Remote ID serial number.
- Pay a \$5 registration fee per drone (valid for 3 years).
- Display the FAA registration number on the drone's exterior.

Safety Guidelines for Youth Drone Programs

- Conduct safety briefings before each flight session.
- Use lightweight drones for indoor or beginner use.
- Maintain visual line of sight and avoid flying over people.

- Establish clear takeoff and landing zones.
- Provide protective gear and enforce safe distances.
- Follow FAA and community-based organization safety protocols.
- **AMA Partnership:** Scouting America has partnered with the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) and will follow AMA safety protocols for all drone-related activities. This includes site safety checks, pre-flight inspections, and adherence to AMA flying field guidelines. <https://www.modelaircraft.org/sites/default/files/documents/100.pdf>

Websites

www.Exploring.org : forms, training, and support materials

www.knowbeforeyoufly.org : Drone Kit resources and materials

www.amaflightschool.org:The Academy of Model Aeronautics – go to for educational resources. Has a “How Do I?” section that houses all sorts of guides and advice for drone support.

<https://faadronezone-access.faa.gov> The FAA Drone Zone is the official [Federal Aviation Administration \(.gov\)](https://www.faa.gov) website where drone pilots manage their drone registration, request airspace authorizations, and find educational resources and guidance on drone flight regulations.

Free Drone Kits

Through our partnering with the FAA Youth Drone Initiative and support from the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA), we are pleased to announce the donation of **500 free drone kits** from the FAA as part of the federal “**Know Before You Fly**” initiative.

- **These kits will be distributed as incentives to newly registered Drone Aviation Exploring clubs and posts, while supplies last.**
- **Up to 20 kits will be available for local** councils and may be used as recruitment tools.
- All new Aviation Exploring Drone clubs and posts must be registered under the Special Interest Code: DRONES.
- The free drone incentive is available for new Aviation Exploring Drone clubs and posts started after 10/1/2025.
- The drone kits are for indoor flying, and the drones do not require FAA registration.
- All operators must complete the TRUST training prior to use.