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# MSC Membership Guide

*The MSC Membership Guide is updated periodically. The current master version of the document is available online at [mnsoaringclub.com](http://mnsoaringclub.com).*

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## **1. About This Document: Policies and Procedures**

The MSC Board of Directors defines all club policies and procedures that are not set forth in the club's Bylaws. The MSC Membership Guide is the sole repository of membership-related policies and procedures that are not in the Bylaws. Similarly, the MSC Operations Guide is the sole repository of operations-related policies and procedures.

The MSC Membership Guide also supplements or expands upon certain provisions that are covered by the Bylaws. In the event that any content of this document directly contradicts the Bylaws, the Bylaws shall prevail.

The Board of Directors will update the MSC Membership Guide from time to time, as circumstances warrant. Changes to club policies or procedures will be announced in the newsletter and/or by email, and noted in the Change Log at the end of this document.

## **2. Purpose of the Minnesota Soaring Club**

The mission of the Minnesota Soaring Club is defined in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the "Corporation":

Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, or scientific purposes as specified in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of a future federal tax code. This Corporation shall not be operated for profit, but rather shall be operated exclusively for charitable purposes.

The specific purpose of Corporation is educational: To instruct and train individuals for the purpose of developing their capabilities, on subjects related to preserving and fostering public interest in motorless flight. This includes but is not limited to: 1) providing structured instruction in soaring to equip the public with the knowledge, skill, and opportunity to safely pilot sailplanes; 2) educating the public about soaring and related aeronautical, meteorological, aviation safety, and other related topics; 3) participating in public exhibitions and soaring competitions to demonstrate the capabilities of gliders and the skills of pilots; and 4) advancing the art and science of soaring by encouraging members to make flight logs available for researching best soaring practices.

## **3. Obligations of Members**

As defined in the Bylaws, MSC members are obliged to abide by all club policies and procedures; to comply with federal aviation regulations and airfield rules; and to focus on safety, both in the air and on the field.

In addition, MSC members are expected to support the club by performing volunteer service commensurate with their skills and abilities; by participating in club meetings; by handling club equipment with care; by paying dues and flight fees promptly; by representing the club favorably; and by conducting themselves in a helpful and respectful manner at all times.

## **4. Application for Membership**

The MSC Brochure, available via the MSC website, explains that members of the public who wish to apply for membership should submit a written (emailed) application providing basic contact information (name, residence address, email address, phone numbers) and a description of any aviation experience.

Applicants are typically interviewed by one or more members of the Board of Directors, which then reviews the application for possible membership. Membership in MSC is subject to approval by the Board of Directors. The Board considers instruction capacity and other factors when reviewing an applicant's request to join the club.

New members are accepted on a probationary basis for a period of 12 months. During this period the Board of Directors may choose to release the probationary member from the club, in which case the member's membership fee would be refunded, less any outstanding financial obligations to the club (e.g., flight fees). Probationary members may not hold elective office.

## **5. Membership Classes and Privileges**

Membership in the Minnesota Soaring Club is open to those who are interested in aviation and soaring, and who support the mission of the club. Membership is subject to approval by the Board of Directors. The Board regulates the number of members in accord with instruction capacity and other factors.

All club members must be current members of the Soaring Society of America (SSA). This requirement is imposed by the club's fleet insurance.

As defined in the Bylaws, there are five classes of membership:

- Active members
- Inactive members
- Family members
- Associate members
- Youth members

Eligibility requirements and privileges for each membership class, as summarized below, are defined in the Bylaws. In the event that any of the supplementary provisions described below directly contradicts the Bylaws, the Bylaws shall prevail.

## **A. Active Members**

Active members are entitled to participate in all club activities and have full voting privileges. Only Active members are eligible to hold elective office in the club. Active members must be at least 18 years of age.

## **B. Inactive Members**

An Active member who is not in arrears may transition to Inactive membership after at least two years of Active membership in good standing. Inactive members have the right to vote, but are not eligible to hold elective office. Inactive members have limited flying privileges: they may fly using club equipment for only two days per year, accumulative to a maximum of six days.

## **C. Family Members**

A Family member must be sponsored by an Active member in the same immediate family (i.e., spouse or cohabiting partner, sibling, parent or grandparent). Unless sponsored by a spouse/partner, a Family member must be younger than 23 years of age. Family membership for a non-spouse/partner is automatically terminated at the end of the year during which the member turns 23 years old. A Family membership is automatically terminated at the time the sponsoring member leaves the club. Whenever a Family membership is terminated, the Family member would be offered the opportunity to convert to Active or Youth membership, as may be appropriate.

The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a Family member who is younger than 18 years of age must sign a waiver of liability and a financial responsibility agreement. Family members are not eligible to vote or to hold elective office. The sponsoring Active member is responsible for the Family member's financial obligations to the club. Family membership in SSA is required.

The sponsoring Active member and Family member(s), together, have priority for instruction and the use of club equipment equivalent to a single membership. Refer to the MSC Operations Guide for a description of how such shared priority works in practice.

A Family member may convert to Active or Youth membership by paying the difference between the membership fee paid upon joining as a Family member and the current membership fee for the Active or Youth membership.

At its discretion, the Board of Directors may transfer a resigning or deceased member's membership fee and refundable "share" fee, if any, to a Family member who has been

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sponsored by the resigning/deceased member and who wishes to convert to Active membership. The Family member must be at least 18 years old to qualify for the transfer. Any outstanding dues, fees or other assessments owed by the resigning/deceased member must be paid before the transfer can take place.

## **D. Associate Members**

Associate members do not have glider flight privileges, but may be authorized to fly the club's tow plane. Associate members may participate in other club activities, but are not eligible to vote or to hold elected office. Associate members must be at least 18 years of age.

## **E. Youth Members**

Youth members must be between the ages of 14 and 22 years old (inclusive) when admitted to the club. Youth members are entitled to participate in all club activities, but are not eligible to vote or to hold elective office. Some Youth members may be recipients of Phil Schacht Memorial Youth scholarships.

The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a Youth member younger than 18 years of age must sign a waiver of liability and a financial responsibility agreement.

A Youth member who is at least 18 years old may request conversion to Active membership. Youth membership otherwise terminates at the end of the year in which the member turns 24 years old. The second half of the Youth membership fee, if still outstanding, must be paid when converting to Active membership.

## **6. Phil Schacht Memorial Youth Scholarship**

Phil Schacht was a retired Navy navigator, a Northwest Airlines pilot, an aerobatic competitor and an MSC chief instructor. "He was a quiet and kind man who was passionate about teaching youth to fly," recalls longtime MSC instructor Stephen Nesser. To honor Phil the club created the Phil Schacht Memorial Youth Scholarship, in 2009. The scholarship covers the membership fee, making the club more accessible to young soaring enthusiasts. The Board of Directors administers the scholarship.

## **7. Converting to Inactive Membership (and Back Again)**

An Active member who is not in arrears may transition to Inactive membership after at least two years of Active membership in good standing. A request to convert from Active to Inactive membership should be submitted in writing or email to the Secretary or Treasurer.

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The Board of Directors would then review the request. If approved, the conversion to Inactive status would take effect 30 days later.

An Inactive member who wishes to convert back to Active membership should make the request in writing or by email to the Secretary or Treasurer. The Board of Directors would then review the request. If approved, the conversion back to Active status would take effect 30 days later. A member who had been an Inactive member for less than 18 months must pay the difference between Active and Inactive dues for the period of Inactive membership.

## **8. Member Fees and Dues**

The Board of Directors determines all membership fees and dues. As specified in the Bylaws, any increase in the yearly dues or membership fees exceeding 25% in any one fiscal year requires membership approval.

Membership fees and dues are typically used to pay for the club's fixed costs, such as insurance, hangar rent and field-use fee.

The current membership fees and dues for the different member classes are as follows:

**Active members:** The membership fee is \$1250. Of that amount, \$625 is payable upon admission to the club. The remaining \$625 of the membership fee is payable upon the one-year anniversary of admission to the club. Dues are \$750 per year, billed in January.

**Inactive members:** There is no membership fee for Inactive members, who paid the membership fee when they became Active members. Dues are \$206.25 per year, billed in January.

**Family members:** The membership fee is \$150. Dues are \$206.25 per year, billed in January.

**Associate members:** There is no membership fee for Associate members, and no yearly dues are charged.

**Youth members:** The membership fee is \$1000. Of that amount, \$500 is payable upon admission to the club. Youth members who are 18 years of age or older pay the remaining half of the membership fee when they achieve Private Pilot-Glider certification or when they convert to Active membership, whichever occurs first. Dues are \$206.25 per year, billed in January. Some Youth members may be recipients of Phil Schacht Memorial Youth scholarships and/or Soaring Flight Education Association scholarships.



## **9. Flight Fees**

The Board of Directors determines the fees for the use of club equipment. The current fees are as follows:

Tow fee: \$34 hookup + \$1 per 100 feet of altitude (e.g., \$64 for a 3000' tow)

Glider rental: ASK 21 B, \$44/hour; ASK 21, \$41/hour; Junior, \$32/hour

Flight fees are used to pay for aircraft maintenance and repairs, and to maintain reserve funds for future repairs to club aircraft. The reserve funds help ensure the continuity of our operation when repairs are required.

## **10. Refundable “Share” Fees**

A member who joined the club prior to January 1, 2019, and paid a “share” fee is a “legacy” member who is entitled to a refund of the fee after leaving the club, unless the member elects to donate it to the club. The refund for full-share legacy members is \$1500. Fractional-share legacy members are entitled to refunds of either \$833.37 (for 2/3-share members) or \$166.67 (for 1/3-share members).

A member who joined the club after December 31, 2018, and paid a \$500 refundable “share” fee is entitled to the \$500 refund when the member leaves the club, unless the member elects to donate it to the club.

Members who join the club after 2024 do not pay any refundable deposit, and thus would not be due any refund when leaving the club.

Any outstanding dues, fees or other assessments are subtracted from a refund. Refunds may be delayed if club finances warrant. Members are encouraged to donate their refunds to the club.

## **11. Fractional-Share Membership**

The club no longer offers fractional-share memberships. Voting by the remaining fractional-share club members who have voting privileges is proportional—e.g., a vote by a 1/3-share member is counted as one-third of a whole vote.

## **12. Donating Refunds to the Club**

Members who would be due “share” fee refunds upon leaving the club are encouraged to donate their refunds to the club, to help sustain our mission. Members who donate their

refunds are honored as “Sustaining Members”. Their names are inscribed upon a plaque displayed in the MSC clubhouse. To donate your refund, contact the Treasurer.

## **13. Leaving the Club**

A member who wishes to resign from the club should present a written (emailed) request to the Board. The member’s resignation will take effect no sooner than 30 days after receipt of the request.

## **14. Damages**

Members are liable for damage to aircraft or equipment resulting from their own carelessness or negligence, to the extent that the damage is not covered by club insurance. If the club has chosen to self-insure the aircraft, then the culpable member would be liable for only the first \$500 of damages. Violation of FAA regulations or club policies would be presumptive evidence of negligence, but the Board of Directors makes the final determination. Damage assessments issued by the Board must be paid before the member is allowed to use any club equipment.

## **15. Indebtedness**

Members are expected pay promptly when billed for dues, flight fees or other assessments. Members who have not remitted payment within 60 days of billing are ineligible to use club equipment. It is the Treasurer’s role to attempt contact with a member in arrears to seek payment and to explain the ineligibility, and to notify the Board of Directors about the member in arrears. The Board of Directors may expel a member in arrears.

## **16. Grounding, Suspension and Expulsion**

The MSC Bylaws provide for the suspension or revocation of membership when a member fails to comply with the obligations of membership. The following related policies and procedures are applicable:

### **A. Immediate Grounding**

A member may be immediately grounded by a Field Operations Officer or an MSC instructor when there is credible reason to believe that the member has acted in violation of applicable regulations or has disregarded safe flying practices. The member remains grounded until the matter is reviewed, within 10 days, by the Chief Instructor or the Board of Directors. The revocation of flight privileges ends automatically after 10 days if

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it has not been reviewed by the Chief Instructor or the Board of Directors. Within that 10-day period the Chief Instructor or Board of Directors may choose to reinstate the member's flight privileges, to extend the revocation, and/or to impose measures intended to remediate the behavior that led to the revocation.

If the revocation of flight privileges of a member who has been grounded by a Field Operations Office or an MSC instructor is extended beyond 10 days, then the Board of Directors reviews the matter as a suspension, in a manner pursuant to the MSC bylaws.

## **B. Suspension**

A suspended member is not entitled to use club equipment. A suspended member is responsible for any dues assessed during the period of suspension.

## **C. Expulsion**

The use of club equipment while under the influence of intoxicants or mood-altering chemicals (e.g., alcohol, marijuana) is grounds for expulsion from the club.

# **17. Political Activity**

Under the Internal Revenue Code, all section 501(c)(3) organizations are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office.

Contributions to political campaign funds or public statements of position (verbal or written) made on behalf of the organization in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office clearly violate the prohibition against political campaign activity.

Club members are likewise prohibited from representing themselves as MSC members when participating in such political activity. A violation of this prohibition is grounds for suspension or expulsion.

# **18. Appointed Personnel**

## **A. Chief Instructor, Other Instructors**

The Director of Operations or the Board of Directors may appoint a Chief Flight Instructor to supervise MSC instructors and to organize the MSC flight instruction program.

MSC instructors may be appointed by the Chief Instructor or the Director of Operations, although the Board of Directors retains ultimate responsibility for MSC instructor

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appointment. Instructors must hold a current (unexpired) FAA-issued flight instructor certificate with a glider rating (CFI-G).

MSC instructors are not compensated for providing instruction to MSC members. However, the MSC Board may approve reimbursement of up to \$200 for fees associated with obtaining CFI-G certification. The reimbursement is payable after the instructor has flown five instruction flights in club gliders. In addition, MSC instructors are not charged for yearly currency flights in club gliders.

## **B. Chief Tow Pilot, Other Tow Pilots**

The Director of Operations or the Board of Directors may appoint a Chief Tow Pilot to maintain a cadre of active tow pilots, to supervise tow pilot training and to oversee tow pilot performance.

MSC tow pilots may be appointed by the Chief Tow Pilot or the Director of Operations, although the Board of Directors retains ultimate responsibility for MSC tow pilot appointment. Tow pilots must meet the applicable FAA, MSC and insurance requirements; refer to the *MSC Operations Guide* for details.

MSC tow pilots are not compensated for flying the club tow plane. However, the MSC Board may approve reimbursement of up to \$200 for fees associated with obtaining a towing endorsement. The reimbursement is payable after the pilot has towed club gliders five times. In addition, MSC tow pilots are not charged for yearly currency flights in the club tow plane.

## **C. Field Operation Officers**

The Director of Operations or an MSC instructor may authorize a member to be a Field Operation Officer. To qualify, a member must be at least 18 years old, have the appropriate experience and be willing to accept the responsibilities. A FOO candidate must be thoroughly checked out under policies overseen by the Director of Operations.

Generally, newer members lack the experience to serve as FOO. Most FOOs are certificated with a glider rating. Field Operation Officers are given significant authority and responsibility, and must be up to the task by having gained significant operational and flight knowledge. Refer to the *MSC Operations Guide* for additional information.

## **19. Miscellaneous Provisions**

### **A. Membership Meetings**

Except for Annual Meetings and Special Meetings, as defined in Article V of the Bylaws, meetings of MSC members shall be information-only, non-voting meetings, unless specified otherwise in advance by the Board of Directors.

### **B. Periodic Reviews**

A Finance Committee chaired by the Treasurer and including at least two other members is responsible for an annual review of the club's financial records and accounts. The committee is also responsible for confirming that submissions required annually by government agencies have been properly filed. The Finance Committee reports its findings and recommendations to the Board of Directors in December of each year.

### **C. Spending**

Any capital expenditure exceeding \$10,000 must be approved by the membership.

A member of the Board of Directors may authorize non-capital expenditures (e.g., aircraft repairs) not exceeding \$5,000.

### **D. Insurance**

A liability insurance policy must be kept in force at all times to protect the club. The club may purchase hull insurance to cover physical damage to aircraft, or it may self-insure for such risks. Directors and Officers liability insurance may be purchased at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

## **20. Membership Guide Change Log**

### **Version 1.0 (1/4/2025)**

Initial release