

# CBO and AC 91-57C Communications

## FAQ

- *What is a Community Based Organization (CBO)?*
  - CBOs are organizations that meet the statutory definition in Section 44809(h):
    - Described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
    - Exempt from tax under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
    - Mission of which is demonstrably the furtherance of model aviation;
    - Provide a comprehensive set of safety guidelines for all aspects of model aviation;
    - Provide programming and support for any local charter organizations, affiliates, or clubs; and
    - Provide assistance and support in the development and operation of locally designated model aircraft flying sites
- *What is an FAA-recognized Community Based Organization (CBO)?*
  - Organizations that meet the statutory definition of CBO may apply for FAA recognition. FAA-recognized CBOs may use their safety guidelines to meet the statutory requirement of Section 44809(a)(2) and are eligible to apply for fixed sites, CBO sponsored events and FAA Recognized Identification Areas (FRIAs).
- *How does a Community Based Organization (CBO) show it provides “programming and support for any local charter organizations, affiliates, or clubs”?*
  - CBOs can meet this requirement by showing that they support local chapters (if a national organization). If the CBO is local or a smaller club, they can show how they work with other clubs, schools or local communities.
- *How does a Community Based Organization (CBO) show it “provides assistance and support in the development and operation of locally designated model aircraft flying sites”?*
  - CBOs can meet this requirement by showing how they develop flying sites, flying site criteria, and share that information with other operators at the flying site location or online.
- *How do you apply for FAA-recognition?*
  - Organizations that meet the statutory definition of CBO may apply for FAA-recognition through the FAA’s DroneZone website at <https://faadronezone.faa.gov>.
  - Organizations must be able provide documentation or other evidence which shows they meet the criteria in Section 44809(h).
- *How long will it take to have my Community Based Organization (CBO) officially recognized by the FAA?*

- CBO recognition applications may take up to 90 days or more, depending on the complexity of the application and review of the accompanying safety guidelines.
- *What are “safety guidelines”?*
  - Safety guidelines are rules determined by Community Based Organizations (CBOs), developed in coordination with the FAA, that their members follow. Safety guidelines should be comprehensive and include all aspects of model aircraft or drone flying that the organization expects their members to do. They are submitted to the FAA alongside an organization’s application to be recognized by the FAA as a CBO.
- *Do Community Based Organization (CBO) safety guidelines need to include everything listed in Advisory Circular 91-57C?*
  - No. [AC 91-57C](#) provides application guidance for FAA recognition of CBOs. CBOs may tailor their safety guidelines for a particular type of model aircraft or drone flying (i.e. gliders, First-Person View flying, etc.). It’s a good idea to review all the recommendations in AC 91-57C to ensure submitted safety guidelines consider all aspects of flying.
- *Can the FAA reject a Community Based Organization (CBO) recognition application if they don’t agree with the safety guidelines?*
  - Section 44809 requires that CBO safety guidelines are “developed in coordination with” the FAA. If the FAA finds that the safety guidelines are lacking safety elements, it will contact the applicant to discuss possible improvements. Applications that contain insufficient safety guidelines will not receive FAA recognition.
- *Do I need to be a member of a Community Based Organization (CBO) in order to follow their safety guidelines?*
  - No. CBO membership is not required per Section 44809(a). Many CBOs publish their safety guidelines online for members and the general public to follow.
- *What is a “Fixed Site”?*
  - A Fixed Site is a location in controlled airspace where radio-controlled aircraft and drones are required to have FAA airspace authorizations. FAA approved Fixed Sites allow operators to fly there without the need to obtain individual airspace authorizations.
- *What is a “CBO Sponsored Event”?*
  - Community Based Organization (CBO) sponsored events are events where only unmanned aircraft will be operated. They typically involve a gathering of CBO members and other attendees to display, fly and discuss drones and radio-controlled aircraft.
- *I fly large, over 55lb, model aircraft. Where can I fly?*
  - Model aircraft weighing over 55lbs must comply with FAA-approved CBO standards and limitations and be flown at a fixed site.

- *Does a school have to become a CBO to fly aircraft as part of its curriculum?*
  - No. Schools that qualify as institutions of higher education (as defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965) and JROTC education programs may operate under Section 44809 as a recreational flyer. They may fly using an FAA-recognized CBO's safety guidelines. Additionally, any school that is chartered by an FAA-recognized CBO using drones as part of their educational curriculum may operate under Section 44809 as a recreational flyer.

## TALKING POINTS

- On Monday, October 24, 2022, the FAA began accepting applications for organizations that wish to be officially recognized by the FAA as Community Based Organizations (CBOs).
- Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are defined in Section 44809 as follows:
  - Described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
  - Exempt from tax under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
  - Mission of which is demonstrably the furtherance of model aviation;
  - Provide a comprehensive set of safety guidelines for all aspects of model aviation;
  - Provide programming and support for any local charter organizations, affiliates, or clubs; and
  - Provide assistance and support in the development and operation of locally designated model aircraft flying sites
- Advisory Circular (AC) 91-57C provides details on the Community Based Organization (CBO) process for FAA recognition, including recommended safety guidelines.
- Applications for FAA recognition of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are processed through the FAA's DroneZone website at <https://faadronezone.faa.gov>.
- Each FAA recognized Community Based Organization (CBO) must have a set of safety guidelines that are developed in coordination with the FAA. These safety guidelines will meet the requirement for recreational flyers set forth in Section 44809(a)(2).
- Membership in a Community Based Organization (CBO) is not required by statute.
- FAA recognized Community Based Organizations (CBOs) will be able to apply for FAA Recognized Identification Areas (FRIAs). FRIAs are locations where Remote ID equipment is not required.