

Horsham & District Radio Control Model Club

Learning to fly a radio controlled model aircraft

Part six - The 1st flight

This sheet assumes you have followed all the guidelines in parts one - five of these handouts. The weather's fine, you have an experienced modeller helping you, you have the peg and the model's airworthiness has been checked at the flying site. Now's the time to check it one more time, just to make sure. Assuming everything is fine, then you're ready to fuel-up.

With your helper holding the model, set the throttle to a fast idle, (This should be about 2 notches up, if it has been set up correctly). Connect the glow clip, and using the starter (which nearly everybody has these days) carefully start the engine. You will of course have checked beforehand that nobody is in line with the prop, and there are no loose pieces of rag, etc, that could be caught in the propeller.

Another big assumption, the engine has started first time. Do not try to operate the engine from where you are. Put the starter out of the way, and move to the back of your model. From behind the propeller, remove the glow-clip. The model should then be moved to a safe area, where the engine can be tuned up. Always check that the engine will run consistently when the nose of the model is held up. Also on full throttle check all the radio functions are working correctly.

If you find a problem, shut down the engine, and fix the problem, before trying again. Never fly a model that has a problem, even if you think it'll be all right, it probably won't be.

Following the instructions on sheet 5, move to the take-off area. Let the experienced modeller take the plane up for you. They are far more likely to be able to cope with any initial problems that may be encountered, and assuming there aren't any, will be able to 'trim out' the model for you. When he is happy that the plane is 'safe' he will let you have a go. ! - This is it.

Everything up to now has been theory, flying the model requires practice. Listen to your instructor's advice and do exactly as he says. If you get into difficulties, let him know, so that he can take the transmitter and regain control. (A good instructor will take it in any case). Practice the flying until you are able to fly both a left and right-handed circuit. And then practice some more. Hopefully you'll be enjoying this, but like anything the hardest part is learning. Do not try to rush ahead, as it will probably take you longer.

When you think you are ready, try taking off (with your instructor by your side). This may take several sessions, even months of practice, again take your time, it will come eventually. The hardest part of learning to fly is the landing, and this is covered on the next sheet. For the moment concentrate on controlling the model at all times. Finally after each session, thoroughly clean and check your model over, any problems should be rectified before attempting to fly it again.