

Rocket Safety

Model Rocket Safety Code

1. **Materials.** I will use only lightweight, non-metal parts for the nose, body, and fins of my rocket.
2. **Motors.** I will use only certified, commercially-made model rocket motors, and will not tamper with these motors or use them for any purposes except those recommended by the manufacturer.
3. **Ignition System.** I will launch my rockets with an electrical launch system and electrical motor igniters. My launch system will have a safety interlock in series with the launch switch, and will use a launch switch that returns to the "off" position when released.
4. **Misfires.** If my rocket does not launch when I press the button of my electrical launch system, I will remove the launcher's safety interlock or disconnect its battery, and will wait 60 seconds after the last launch attempt before allowing anyone to approach the rocket.
5. **Launch Safety.** I will use a countdown before launch, and will ensure that everyone is paying attention and is a safe distance of at least 15 feet away when I launch rockets with D motors or smaller, and 30 feet when I launch larger rockets. If I am uncertain about the safety or stability of an untested rocket, I will check the stability before flight and will fly it only after warning spectators and clearing them away to a safe distance.
6. **Launcher.** I will launch my rocket from a launch rod, tower, or rail that is pointed to within 30 degrees of the vertical to ensure that the rocket flies nearly straight up, and I will use a blast deflector to prevent the motor's exhaust from hitting the ground. To prevent accidental eye injury, I will place launchers so that the end of the launch rod is above eye level or will cap the end of the rod when it is not in use.
7. **Size.** My model rocket will not weigh more than 1,500 grams (53 ounces) at liftoff and will not contain more than 125 grams (4.4 ounces) of propellant or 320 N-sec (71.9 pound-seconds) of total impulse. If my model rocket weighs more than one pound (453 grams) at liftoff or has more than four ounces (113 grams) of propellant, I will check and comply with Federal Aviation Administration regulations before flying.
8. **Flight Safety.** I will not launch my rocket at targets, into clouds, or near airplanes, and will not put any flammable or explosive payload in my rocket.
9. **Launch Site.** I will launch my rocket outdoors, in an open area at least as large as shown in [the accompanying table](#), and in safe weather conditions with wind speeds no greater than 20 miles per hour. I will ensure that there is no dry grass close to the launch pad, and that the launch site does not present risk of grass fires.
10. **Recovery System.** I will use a recovery system such as a streamer or parachute in my rocket so that it returns safely and undamaged and can be flown again, and I will use only flame-resistant or fireproof recovery system wadding in my rocket.
11. **Recovery Safety.** I will not attempt to recover my rocket from power lines, tall trees, or other dangerous places.

| LAUNCH SITE DIMENSIONS | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Installed Total Impulse (N-sec) | Equivalent Motor Type | Minimum Site Dimensions (ft.) |
| 0.00--1.25 | 1/4A, 1/2A | 50 |
| 1.26--2.50 | A | 100 |
| 2.51--5.00 | B | 200 |
| 5.01--10.00 | C | 400 |
| 10.01--20.00 | D | 500 |
| 20.01--40.00 | E | 1,000 |
| 40.01--80.00 | F | 1,000 |
| 80.01--160.00 | G | 1,000 |
| 160.01--320.00 | Two Gs | 1,500 |

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High Power Rocket Safety Code

1. **Certification.** I will only fly high power rockets or possess high power rocket motors that are within the scope of my user certification and required licensing.
2. **Materials.** I will use only lightweight materials such as paper, wood, rubber, plastic, fiberglass, or when necessary ductile metal, for the construction of my rocket.
3. **Motors.** I will use only certified, commercially made rocket motors, and will not tamper with these motors or use them for any purposes except those recommended by the manufacturer. I will keep smoking, open flames, and heat sources at least 25 feet away from these motors.
4. **Ignition System.** I will launch my rockets with an electrical launch system, and with electrical motor igniters that are installed in the motor only after my rocket is at the launching or prepping area. My launch system will have a safety interlock that is in series with the launch switch that is not installed until my rocket is ready for launch, and will use a launch switch that returns to the "off" position when released. If my rocket has onboard ignition systems for motors or recovery devices, these will have safety interlocks that interrupt the current path until the rocket is at the launch pad.
5. **Misfires.** If my rocket does not launch when I press the button of my electrical launch system, I will remove the launcher's safety interlock or disconnect its battery, and will wait 60 seconds after the last launch attempt before allowing anyone to approach the rocket.
6. **Launch Safety.** I will use a 5-second countdown before launch, and will ensure that everyone in the launch site is paying attention and that no person is closer to the launch pad than allowed by the accompanying Minimum Distance Table. I will check the stability of my rocket before flight and will not fly it if it cannot be determined to be stable.

7. **Launcher.** I will launch my rocket from a stable device that provides rigid guidance until the rocket has attained a speed that ensures a stable flight, and that is pointed to within 20 degrees of vertical. If the wind speed exceeds 5 miles per hour I will use a launcher length that permits the rocket to attain a safe velocity before separation from the launcher. I will use a blast deflector to prevent the motor's exhaust from hitting the ground. I will ensure that there is no dry grass within a clear distance of each launch pad determined by the accompanying Minimum Distance table, and will increase this distance by a factor of 1.5 if the rocket motor being launched uses titanium sponge in the propellant.
8. **Size.** My rocket will not contain any combination of motors that total more than 40,960 N-sec (9208 pound-seconds) of total impulse. My rocket will not weigh more at liftoff than one-third of the certified average thrust of the high power rocket motor(s) intended to be ignited at launch.
9. **Flight Safety.** I will not launch my rocket at targets, into clouds, near airplanes, or on trajectories that take it directly over the heads of spectators or beyond the boundaries of the launch site, and will not put any flammable or explosive payload in my rocket. I will not launch my rockets if wind speeds exceed 20 miles per hour. I will comply with Federal Aviation Administration airspace regulations when flying, and will ensure that my rocket will not exceed any applicable altitude limit in effect at that launch site.
10. **Launch Site.** I will launch my rocket outdoors, in an open area where trees, power lines, buildings, and persons not involved in the launch do not present a hazard, and that is at least as large on its smallest dimension as one-half of the maximum altitude to which rockets are allowed to be flown at that site or 1500 feet, whichever is greater.
11. **Launcher Location.** My launcher will be at least one half the minimum launch site dimension, or 1500 feet (whichever is greater) from any inhabited building, or from any public highway on which traffic flow exceeds 10 vehicles per hour, not including traffic flow related to the launch. It will also be no closer than the appropriate Minimum Personnel Distance from the accompanying table from any boundary of the launch site.
12. **Recovery System.** I will use a recovery system such as a parachute in my rocket so that all parts of my rocket return safely and undamaged and can be flown again, and I will use only flame-resistant or fireproof recovery system wadding in my rocket.
13. **Recovery Safety.** I will not attempt to recover my rocket from power lines, tall trees, or other dangerous places, fly it under conditions where it may recover in spectator areas or outside the launch site, or attempt to catch it as it approaches the ground.

| MINIMUM DISTANCE TABLE | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Installed Total Impulse (Newton-Seconds) | Equivalent Motor Type | Minimum clear Dimensions (ft.) | Minimum Personnel Distance (ft.) | Minimum Personnel Distance (Complex Rocket) (ft.) |
| 0 -- 320.00 | H or smaller | 50 | 100 | 200 |
| 320.01 -- 640.00 | I | 50 | 100 | 200 |
| 640.01 -- | J | 50 | 100 | 200 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----|------|------|
| 1,280.00 | | | | |
| 1,280.01 -- 2,560.00 | K | 75 | 200 | 300 |
| 2,560.01 -- 5,120.00 | L | 100 | 300 | 500 |
| 5,120.01 -- 10,240.00 | M | 125 | 500 | 1000 |
| 10,240.01 -- 20,480.00 | N | 125 | 1000 | 1500 |
| 20,480.01 -- 40,960.00 | O | 125 | 1500 | 2000 |

Note: A Complex rocket is one that is multi-staged or that is propelled by two or more rocket motors

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