BMFA Safety Review Committee (SRC)
Summary of Incident Reports for 2024

SRC meeting, 13th March 2025

This summary covers 20 'Mandatory Occurrence Reports' submitted over a period covering all of 2024 and 2025 to date.

These 20 reports are those logged using the BMFA 'mandatory occurrence reporting' system that required onward submission to the AAIB. They represent approximately 10% of all initial submissions.

This report is intended for circulation to all members, as well as Area and Club committees.

The SRC includes representation from BMFA Staff (including the CEO), the AAIB, the CAA, the BMFA insurance brokers & underwriters, the ASRC and Areas Council.

The aim of this summary report is to provide a better understanding of the nature of the reported incidents and identify any trends or common factors to help members avoid similar incidents in the future and hence reduce the risk to uninvolved individuals and property.

Summary:-

Control System	No. of Incidents	Percentage
Free Flight	0	0%
35MHz RC	1	5%
2.4GHz RC	19	95%
Total	20	100%

Principal Causes

- **Pilot error** – something that the pilot did/didn't do which put the model in a poor situation, and/or followed by inappropriate corrective actions.

- **Technical** – failure of the model structure or systems, or failure with the transmitter.

- **Inconclusive** – insufficient report data, and/or pilot's opinion.

Principal Cause	No. of Incidents	Percentage
Pilot error		
Loss of sight – orientation/distance	3	15%
Loss of sight - sun or haze	4	20%
Inappropriate model for wind strength	1	5%
Mishandling	3	15%
Pre-flight check oversight	2	10%
Sub Total	***13***	65%
Technical		
Electrical failure / control system	3	15%
Structural failure	1	5%
Dead-stick	1	5%
Sub Total	***5***	25%
Inconclusive		
Lack of report detail, opinion	2	10%
Total	**20**	100%

Model Recovery

Model Recovery	No. of Incidents	Percentage
Recovered	10	50%
Not Recovered	10	50%
Total	20	100%

Third Party Involvement

3rd Party	No. of Incidents	Percentage
3rd Party Involved	2	10%
3rd Party Not involved	2	10%
3rd Party Damage	5	25%
3rd Party Injury	0	0%
Unknown	11	55%
Total	20	100%

Principal Causes

- Approximately two thirds of all incidents involved the pilot's actions often contributing to a "flyaway" and or not taking appropriate/best actions once a problem has arisen, hence these incidents are essentially preventable.

- Approximately half of the incidents mentioned above were simply due to losing sight of the model by flying too far away, across the sun, into cloud/haze, or looking at the transmitter.

- Together with trying to fly an inappropriate model in a strong wind, half of all incidents directly involved the pilot's choice of actions.

- It is disappointing to see that two incidents involved oversight during pre-flight checks.

- A few reports were inconclusive, generally because the report wasn't completed with enough detail, and or the pilot just reported 'loss of control'.

- There was no significant correlation of incidents with generic model type, i.e. FW, Helicopter, Silent Flight, M-R etc.

Model Recovery

- Half of the incident reports involved models that have not been recovered. This generally means it is not known exactly where they are. This causes concern with the **AAIB**, as there is then no information regarding any potential injury to uninvolved individuals and or damage to property.

- Also, in some cases, not recovering the model means that the cause of the incident may never be known.

- Several incidents involved fire damage to property (crops) caused by Lithium batteries.

Suggestions

- Continue to encourage members to fully report incidents. That way more data and trends can be analysed.

- Encourage pilots to be mindful about flying at the limits of visibility, either due to distance or sun/cloud. Uncontrolled flight out of sight presents a serious risk of injury or damage to "non-involved" third parties. Far better to take action to bring the model down nearby, than risk a fly away.

- When flying with similar models, keep a significant distance apart, and never take your eyes off your model.

- Encourage club members to support one another as informal observers and be prepared to alert pilots of problems and promptly step in with support.

- If flying alone, pay extra attention to maintaining visual contact.

- Encourage knowledge about fail-safes and how to set them and regularly check their operation before flying sessions.

- Encourage members to fit location finders to help recover lost models or perhaps make use of onboard GPS telemetry.

- Encourage members to consider the environmental conditions and what actions to take if something should go wrong, **before** they commit to flight.

- To this end Clubs should encourage the use of SWEETS, SMART and the other BMFA pre-flight and pre-take-off checks as a routine.

D R McClure
SRC Chairman
14th March 2025