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## *Torrey Pines Gulls Membership Guide*

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## **1. Introduction**

Membership in the Torrey Pines Gulls Radio Controlled Soaring Society (TPG) provides a variety of benefits and flying opportunities. This guide summarizes key information about your membership.

## **2. Club History**

TPG is the second oldest chartered club in the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) dedicated solely to RC soaring. Formed from a collection of enthusiasts in the late 1960s and chartered in 1970, the club started at the Torrey Pines Gliderport in La Jolla, CA. As members became interested in thermal soaring, the club expanded with two additional inland sites at Poway and Encinitas.

Our members have excelled at national and international competition, invented new control systems and aircraft designs, and helped promote the advancement of RC soaring through newsletters, magazines, and books. The club helped pioneer interest in hand launch soaring through the annual International Hand Launch Glider Festival (IHLGF) in Poway. Some of our members have even made RC aircraft for the movie industry or demonstrated the use of RC aircraft for prototyping of larger human-piloted designs.

The club has traditionally included a mix of laypersons simply interested in the joy of flight to professionals from the local aerospace industry. Membership typically includes a cross-section of all ages from students to retirees. Given the history and importance of the Torrey Pines Gliderport to the history of RC soaring in the United States, the AMA honored the Gliderport as its first National Model Aviation Heritage Landmark.

## **3. Membership Benefits**

Membership in TPG provides multiple benefits, all of which have been designed to enhance your RC soaring enjoyment:

- Satisfies club membership prerequisite to fly at the Torrey Pines Gliderport, a world-renowned RC soaring site
- Access to the Encinitas Flight Center
- Access to the Poway Flight Center
- An assortment of regular contests and fun fly events, across multiple disciplines
- Monthly club newsletter full of news, soaring articles, history and more
- A dedicated Google Group for communication within the club
- Year-end celebration to recognize top finishers in our monthly contests and a chance to get together with club members you might not otherwise see during the year
- A common voice to advocate for and preserve our sport and flying sites

If you have ideas or recommendations to enhance the club, please contact the Executive Council; we are here for you.



#### 4. Membership Process

Becoming a TPG member is easy. You can join at any time, but all memberships run for the calendar year. Once you are a member, you will receive a renewal reminder each November.

AMA membership (Full or Youth) is a prerequisite for TPG membership. The TPG Membership Chairman will confirm your AMA membership when your TPG application is processed, so please make sure your AMA membership is current.



AMA membership (and the insurance coverage it provides) is mandatory to maintain an active TPG membership. If your AMA membership lapses, your TPG membership is automatically suspended until you notify the TPG Membership Chairman of your new AMA expiration date. Please set a reminder for yourself, as TPG may not send out a notice of membership suspension.

Refer to the TPG website (<http://www.torreypinesgulls.org/membership/>) for the current dues structure and membership application. In addition to a full membership, we also offer reduced rate youth and student memberships. Full Members can receive a credit of up to \$20 on annual dues; \$10 per each half-day working at any TPG flying field.

All memberships are processed through the TPG website. We encourage everyone to pay their dues using PayPal, but we can accept checks if you prefer. Once your membership is processed, you will receive a new membership card for the coming year and a new key for the locks on the gates to the Encinitas and Poway fields. Your membership card will also include your Torrey Pines Gliderport rating (see below), and you will receive a lanyard to display your TPG membership card while soaring at the Torrey Pines Gliderport.

## **5. Temporary Memberships**

TPG offers two types of Temporary Membership: *Sponsored* and *Contest*.

### **5.1. Temporary Sponsored Membership**

As a Full TPG member you may sponsor a guest to be a Temporary Sponsored Member. These temporary members are those persons who are sponsored by a current TPG member and wish to make use of a TPG flying field for a period of no more than two weeks. A TPG member may sponsor only one temporary member at any given time. Temporary Sponsored Memberships are complimentary, and is a mechanism intended for unusual circumstances (*e.g.*, an out-of-town pilot, but well-known to the sponsoring member, here for a short period of time).

Temporary Sponsored Members who wish to fly at the Torrey Pines Gliderport must meet all requirements to fly as established by City of San Diego and follow the Gliderport concessionaire rules. These temporary Gliderport arrangements are limited to two days. Refer to Section 8.1 of this document for additional information.

Temporary Sponsored Members who wish to fly at the Encinitas or Poway fields must be a current AMA member or at minimum purchase a three-month trial AMA membership. The TPG sponsor is responsible for confirming their guest holds the required AMA membership, and to provide field orientation instructions during the guest's first field visit. On subsequent visits, any TPG member can be present for gate/field access. Temporary Sponsored Members will not be given a gate key.

### **5.2. Temporary Contest Membership**

Temporary Contest Members are those persons who enter a TPG contest/event and pay any applicable non-member fee in addition to the fee charged to regular members. The temporary membership is valid only for the duration of the event, and for only the flying field at which the event takes place.

The contest CD is considered to be the sponsor and is responsible for verifying the required AMA status. A temporary membership fee (in addition to the contest fee) is collected as part of the contest registration process.

## 6. Communication

TPG maintains multiple communication channels to keep members up to date on club activities and events. The TPG website (<http://www.torreypinesgulls.org>) makes club-related information available to everyone, including:

- Club officers and contact points.
- Membership information.
- Flying field information.
- Event descriptions and rules.
- Club calendar.
- Monthly newsletter, and more...

All TPG members (and only current members) are invited to join the Torrey Pines Gulls Google group ([tpgulls@googlegroups.com](mailto:tpgulls@googlegroups.com)). All new members will receive an invitation. Joining is totally up to you, and you must actively opt-in (we do not passively enroll you). Any valid email address will work; you do not need a Google address.

To keep the traffic on the Group focused on club-related business we ask that your messages should:

- Be related to TPG or AMA.
- Be related to soaring.
- Not contain commercial content.
- Only list items for sale that are RC related and owned by the TPG member posting.
- Avoid politics other than topics strictly related to TPG/AMA best interests (*e.g.*, pending FAA actions).

In the event of significant deviations from the posting guidelines, the TPG Communications Officer has authority to suspend or bar any member violating these rules from the Google Group.

If you need to make any changes (join, drop, change your email address, etc.) send an email to [membership@torreypinesgulls.org](mailto:membership@torreypinesgulls.org). You can also review old messages and manage your personal settings directly on the TPGulls Google Group page (<https://groups.google.com/g/tpgulls?pli=1>).

The club maintains a presence on RC Groups with a dedicated TPG forum, and threads for our various monthly F3K, F5J and TD contests. There is also usually a thread for each year's IHLGF in the Hand Launch forum.

TPG forum (<https://www.rcgroups.com/torrey-pines-gulls-672/>)

Sailplane Events forum (<https://www.rcgroups.com/sailplane-events-388/>)

Hand Launch forum (<https://www.rcgroups.com/hand-launch-96/>)

The club also has a Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/TorreyPinesGulls>) where you can find soaring related posts from members and friends.

## 7. Flying Disciplines

TPG members enjoy a variety of flying disciplines from competition to “fun fly” and from slope to thermal soaring. Some are well-defined by FAI classes (*e.g.*, F3K, F3F, and F5J) while recreational flying is simply “fly whatever you have.”

### 7.1. *Slope Soaring*

TPG members have access to the world-class slope flying site at the Torrey Pines Gliderport. Slope lift is provided by westerly winds off the ocean hitting the 300-foot cliff. Ideal days for flying RC aircraft are generally when the wind is nine (9) MPH or more from the west. Of course, lighter/more efficient aircraft can be flown in lighter conditions. The landing zone at the Gliderport is east of the cliff behind the flight mound and is very generous in size, making landings quite easy on most days.

Depending on the wind conditions we often fly everything from small DLGs to large scale sailplanes. Many RC pilots consider a 3-meter F3B or F3F glider ideal for Torrey, given the big air space, good lift, and large landing zone. Other gliders are certainly suitable. Keep in mind, we share the airspace with manned aircraft, namely hang gliders and paragliders, sometimes even manned sailplanes, and as such we must adhere to all the site-specific rules which include checking in daily at the concessionaire’s office and paying the applicable fee.

Competitive events/contests are generally not held on a regular basis at Torrey, other than an occasional F3F slope race in the spring. We do sponsor a few themed fun-flies throughout the year, and there may be some friendly competitions organized for future fun-fly events. Stay tuned to the newsletter, website, and TPG Google Groups for announcements.

Slope soaring contest requirements are in the AMA Radio Control Soaring rules ([https://www.modelaircraft.org/sites/default/files/RCSoaring\\_2019-2021.pdf](https://www.modelaircraft.org/sites/default/files/RCSoaring_2019-2021.pdf)).





## 7.2. *Thermal Duration Soaring (TD)*

TD soaring is flown at our Encinitas and Poway fields for recreation, and in contest settings. The TD contest format is just as the name suggests – motorless, timed duration flights from a winch launch, with a scored landing. Number of rounds (flights) and task times are at the contest director's discretion and are generally defined when the specific contest date is announced. Your total score is based on your flight duration for each round, as compared to the target task time, and landing accuracy.

Thermal duration contest requirements are in the AMA Radio Control Soaring rules ([https://www.modelaircraft.org/sites/default/files/RCSoaring\\_2019-2021.pdf](https://www.modelaircraft.org/sites/default/files/RCSoaring_2019-2021.pdf)).





### 7.3. *Discus Launch Gliders (DLG – FAI F3K)*

TPG members were early pioneers in the hand-launched glider movement that eventually grew into the formal FAI F3K category. We primarily fly F3K at our Poway field, although this class of flying is also permitted at our Encinitas field. On a particularly calm day you might even see a DLG at the Gliderport! Since 1994, we have hosted the annual IHLGF which draws upwards of 80 pilots from around the world including Canada, Brazil, Germany, New Zealand, and others.

Sailplanes used in this discipline are formally defined in the FAI F3K standard. Key requirements are a maximum wingspan of 1.5 meters, and the plane must be hand-launched. Smaller one-meter DLGs are also available and are a great way to gain an introduction to the sport.

In addition to just flying for the fun of it, F3K provides the opportunity to fly in a unique contest format based on flying a defined task (typically a given number of flights meeting defined target times) within a given window time (typically 10 minutes). Each pilot flies with a timer who not only times the flights but also acts as a lift spotter and even at times a coach. The pilot-timer teamwork is one of the elements of DLG flying that makes it so popular.

Formal definition of F3K contest tasks and airplane requirements can be found on the FAI website ([https://www.fai.org/sites/default/files/ciam/sc4\\_vol\\_f3\\_soaring\\_21.pdf](https://www.fai.org/sites/default/files/ciam/sc4_vol_f3_soaring_21.pdf)). There is also an active RC Groups Hand launch forum (<https://www.rcgroups.com/hand-launch-96/>).



#### 7.4. *Electric Powered Thermal Duration Gliders (FAI F5J)*

F5J (electric motor-assisted, limited run) duration soaring is flown at our Poway field for recreation, and in contest settings.

The F5J contest format is unique in that your aircraft's altitude is recorded by the altimeter switch 10 seconds after motor shut-off (whether manually by the pilot or at 30 seconds by the motor run limiter). You are then assessed "penalty" points for each one-meter increment of altitude. From this point on, the objective is to maximize your flight time up to a 10-minute target. Finally, points are awarded for landing accuracy. Your total score is based on your flight duration and landing accuracy, minus launch height penalty points, as compared to the other pilots in the same flight window (man-on-man scoring). See the USA F5J contest rules (<http://www.f5j-usa.com>) for a complete description.

Pilots of all skill levels are welcome at our contests. We typically fly both Open and Sportsman (entry) classes for scoring purposes.



### 8. Flying Sites

As a TPG member you have access to three flying sites. Each offers a different set of conditions for a variety of flying opportunities. The Torrey Pines Gliderport is a coastal slope site in a City of San Diego park. Our Encinitas and Poway Flight Centers are inland thermal sites on private property, accessed through locked gates. We change these locks at the beginning of each year, to ensure only active members have access.



### 8.1. Torrey Pines Gliderport

The soaring site at the Torrey Pines Gliderport is part of Torrey Pines City Park, located at 2800 Torrey Pines Scenic Drive, La Jolla, 0.3 mile west of the intersection of North Torrey Pines Road. It is owned by the City of San Diego and leased to the concessionaire Air California Adventure (<https://www.flytorrey.com>) for motorless flight operations.



As such, there some extra steps required to fly at the Gliderport:

1. You must show proof of liability insurance to the Torrey Pines Gliderport concessionaire. For RC glider pilots, a copy of your current AMA card (Full or Youth membership) is accepted as proof of liability. Note: AMA Park Pilot membership does not provide adequate liability coverage and is not permitted at the Gliderport.
2. The concessionaire will ask for your current TPG (or TPSSS) membership card to provide proof of a Gliderport Pilot Rating. If your card does not correctly reflect your rating, then contact the Membership chair to get an updated card (or learn how to obtain a rating).
3. The concessionaire requires all pilots – radio control (RC), paraglider (PG), hang glider (HG), or full-scale sailplane (FS) – to view an Orientation Safety Video, sign the current year's waiver, and be video recorded reading a prescribed statement.
4. You must pay the concessionaire either a one-day or annual use fee.

### *Site Rules*

The Torrey Pines Gliderport is a complex operations area. Understanding and obeying the Gliderport Site Rules and the AMA Safety Rules is of the utmost importance for the safety of all pilots and spectators. The City of San Diego only allows motorless flight at the Gliderport. Electric or fuel powered aircraft of any kind are not permitted. If you have a powered glider, you must either remove or disable the propeller (or ducted fan) or tape/rubber band to secure a folding propeller.

You must have a Torrey Pines Gliderport rating before you can fly your RC glider solo. If you do not yet have a rating, once you meet all the other requirements, you may fly under the direct supervision of a rated pilot until you gain your rating. To become rated, contact the TPG Slope Coordinator to schedule a Pilot Rating flight at the Gliderport. The objective of the Pilot Rating flight is to ensure the RC glider pilot understands the Site Rules, demonstrates confident, safe control of his glider from launch to landing and CAN ANTICIPATE AND GIVE SIGNIFICANT CLEARANCE TO AIR TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIANS, at all times and in crowded situations.

The Pilot Rating process is not designed to be arduous, and is conducted in a friendly, win-win manner, with safety and enjoyment of the sport for all at its foundation.

We expect the RC pilot to be constantly checking their own glider's path, but also, for other RC gliders, slow-flying paragliders, and fast-flying hang-gliders. Constant adherence to the "blue sky rule" is a must and will greatly reduce the possibility of a collision between your glider and other aircraft. We also look for a competent landing pattern and landing. You will be issued a rating that will be imprinted on the next issue of your TPG membership card.

If you, as a rated pilot, have a temporary sponsored member join you at the Gliderport they can also fly. They must first meet the four concessionaire requirements listed above and can then fly under your direct supervision after you have briefed them on the local flight rules. Note: the TPG member must spot for the guest and cannot fly at the same time.

As of 2024, the Torrey Pines Gliderport is approved as an FAA-Recognized Identification Area (FRIA) with the following dimensions pictured below. RC gliders flying within the FRIA do not have to be equipped with remote ID (RID).



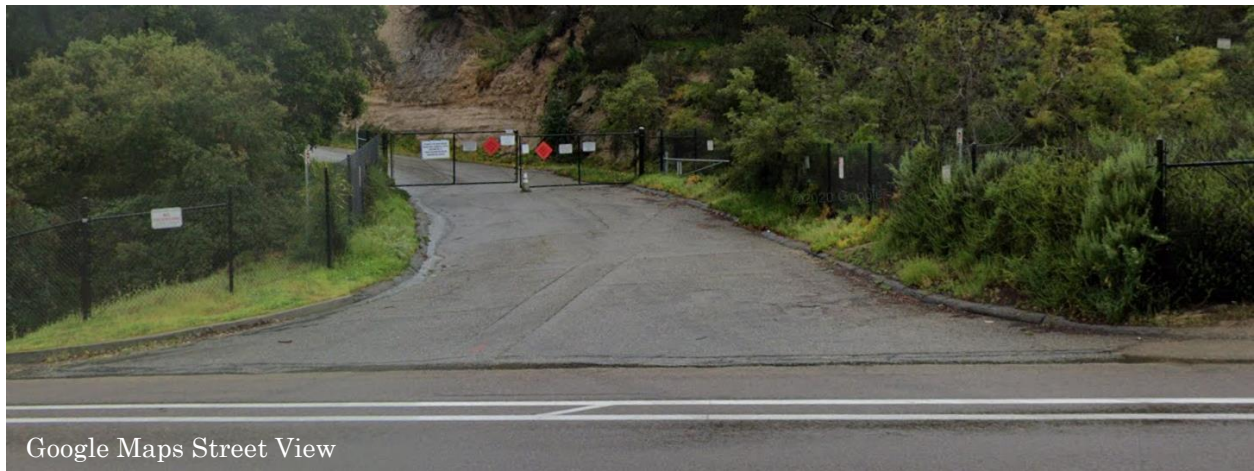


## 8.2. *Encinitas Flight Center*

Our Encinitas field is located on a portion of a retired County of San Diego land fill. The entrance to the field is at 2099 Encinitas Boulevard, 0.2 miles north of the intersection of Manchester Avenue.

Access is through two separate, locked gates. The key issued with your membership card will unlock the gates. If the first gate is locked when you arrive at the field, you must secure the gate behind you once you enter (okay to drape the lock chain over the gate). If it is unlocked, leave the gate the way you found it, as most likely someone from the County or one of their contractors is at the site. The second gate may be left unlocked while you are at the field. Once again if you find it unlocked leave it as you found it. Continue driving on the road to the top of the hill, which is the location of our parking area and field. Parking is only allowed on the gravel parking pad or next to our storage trailer.





Because the site is a retired San Diego County land fill, we must adhere to specific County rules to not adversely impact the site:

- Driving out onto the field is not permitted because tire tracks could impact the drainage pattern.
- Driving any kind of stake into the ground is not permitted because it could rupture one of the methane gas lines buried below the surface, and any holes will impact the drainage pattern.

- The field is closed to flying for five days following a “rain event” (defined as more than 0.25” of rain in 24 hours), because even foot traffic on the softened soil could impact the drainage pattern.

Our use permit for Encinitas only allows motorless flight. **Electric or fuel powered aircraft are expressly not permitted.** If you have a powered glider, you must either remove or disable the propeller (or ducted fan) or tape/rubber band to secure a folding propeller.

TPG has two winch setups stored at the field. Before using them for the first time, you must contact a member who is familiar with their operation and can instruct you on the procedure. You may also use your own high-start by anchoring it to one of the two winch turnaround stanchions at the west end of the launch area, or simply hand-launch.

No flying is allowed over the houses adjacent to the field. In addition, there are high-voltage power lines along the east boundary of the field. The area within a 100-foot radius around these lines is a “no-fly” zone. Refer to the field sign at the parking pad for a detailed map of the field and a listing of the field rules.

## Torrey Pines Gulls Welcome To The Encinitas Flight Center

These rules are set by San Diego County Lease Agreement for the field.



### General Rules

1. You must be a member of AMA and TPG (or be accompanied by a TPG member) – If you are here as a guest please be prepared to show a valid AMA membership card.
2. All pilots must adhere to AMA rules and safety procedures.



### Flight Center Specific Rules

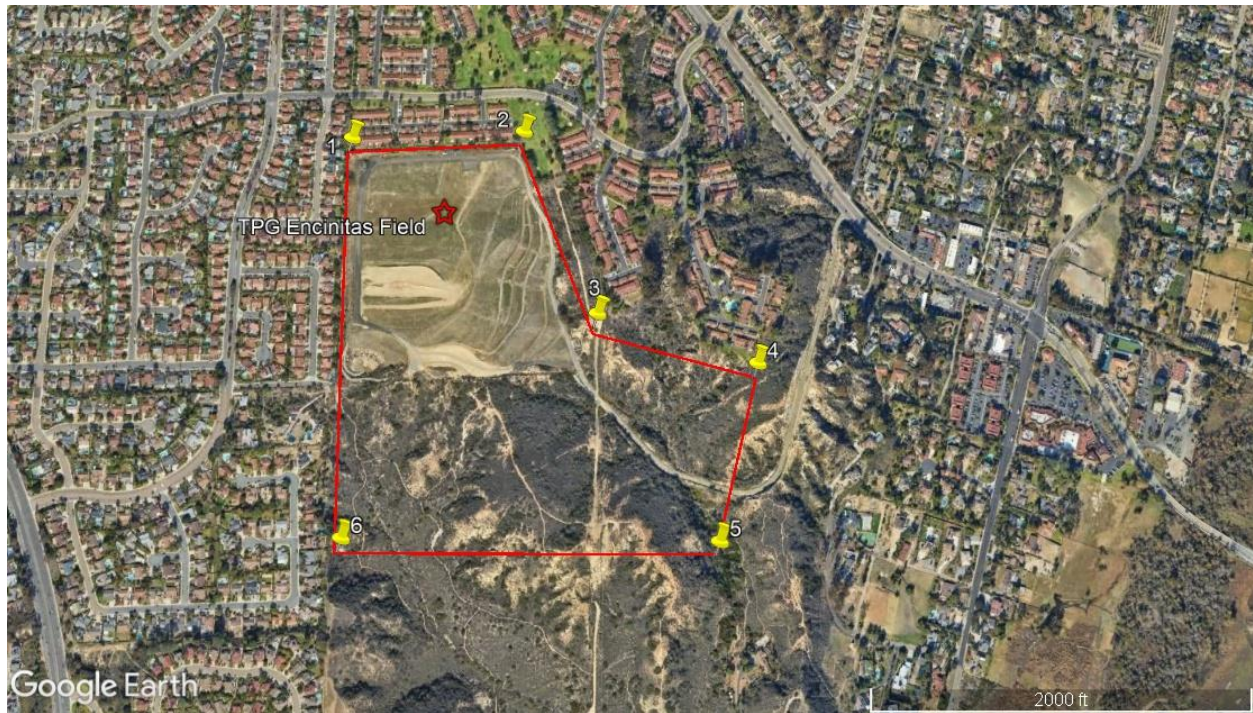
1. This is a Glider-Only Field. No powered aircraft of any kind (including e-gliders) are allowed.
2. **No Flying** within 100 ft of the power lines.
3. The Main Gate must be secured after entry.
4. Vehicles are limited to the established roads and parking areas – driving out onto the land-fill is never allowed.
5. No objects may be driven into the field surface.
6. Following a rain event (>0.25” in 24 hours) the field is closed for five days.
7. Any On-Field safety incident must be immediately reported to TPG Safety Officer.

Contact	Name	Number
TPG Safety Officer	Cliff Hunter	(760)-703-4497
San Diego County Public Works		Check signs on the Gates

In case of an immediate emergency dial 9-1-1. Our location is: 2099 Encinitas Blvd. Encinitas Ca. 92024  
Cross street opposite entrance is Via Del Cerrito

As of 2024 the Encinitas Flight Center is approved as an FAA-Recognized Identification Area (FRIA) with the following dimensions pictured below. RC gliders flying within the FRIA do not have to be equipped with remote ID (RID).



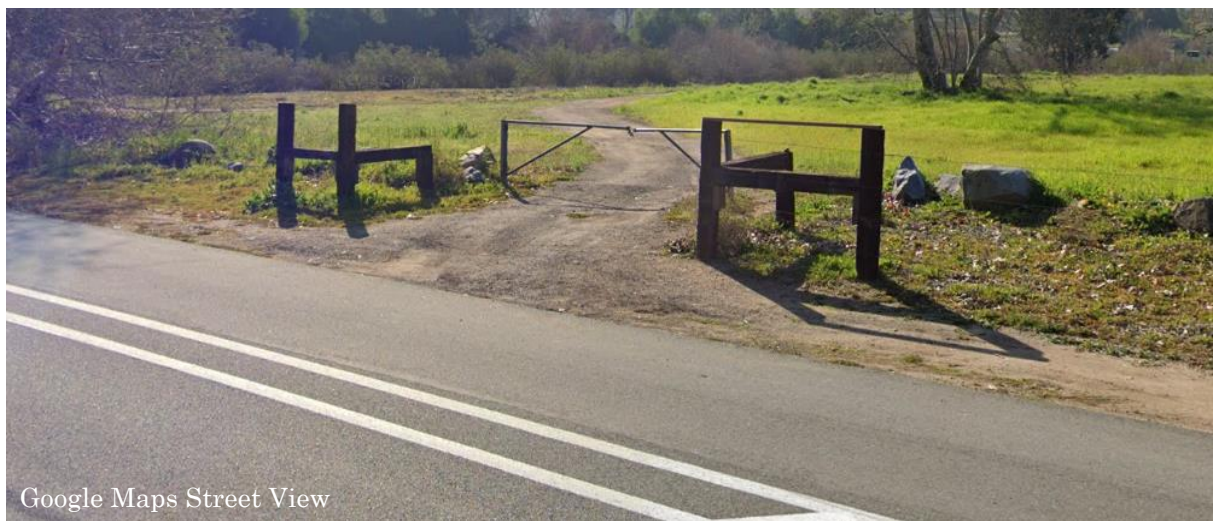


### 8.3. *Poway Flight Center*

The Poway field is located off Garden Road, just to the south of Garden Road Elementary School. Access is through a locked gate east of the gravel parking lot, opposite the park at 14800 Garden Road.

The key issued with your membership card will unlock the gate. The gate must always be secured (unless there is a contest or other event with a significant amount of in/out traffic). If leaving the gate open, secure the lock from theft by locking it to one of the gate links. Be sure to lock the gate if you are the last person out and ensure the TPG lock is properly chained in with the owner's lock.





The areas surrounding the field are an active horse facility. As such horses and people are likely to be nearby. Even if you are outside the no-fly zone, you are responsible for maintaining a safe distance between your plane and the horses and people.

Due to the proximity of the horse facility, there are strict limits on where flight is permitted. In general, the entire quadrant to the southeast of the field is a “no-fly” zone. Refer to the sign at the field for further definition. If you intrude on the no-fly zone you risk losing your flight privilege at the field and possibly jeopardize the entire club’s access privilege.

## Torrey Pines Gulls - Poway Flight Center

### Welcome to the Poway Flight Center - We Are Guests Here

Our ongoing use of this property is totally dependent on being good guests. Please respect the rules and make safe flying your number one priority.

#### Horses and People

The areas surrounding the field are an active horse facility. As such horses and people are likely to be nearby. Even if you are in the fly-zone you are responsible for maintaining a safe distance between your plane and the horses and people.

#### What Is Required To Fly Here?

1. AMA membership. If you are a visitor please be prepared to show your card.
2. Membership in the Torrey Pines Gulls (or be accompanied by a TPG member)
3. Everyone must obey all AMA and local flight regulations.

#### What May I Fly Here?

Poway is a glider-only field. F5J/K gliders are allowed. No other powered aircraft are allowed.

### Restricted Flight Zone

Due to the proximity of the horse facility there are strict limits on where flight is permitted. If you violate the zones you risk losing your flight privilege here and possibly jeopardize the privilege to fly here for everyone.

### The entire area over the horse facility is No-Fly



Please remember, we are guests there. Our ongoing use of the property is totally dependent on proper conduct. Please respect the rules and make safety your number one priority. In addition, TPG does not store any equipment (*e.g.*, winch setups) at the field. You may use your own winch, a high-start, limited-run electric motor (see below), or simply hand-launch.

At Poway, we have permission to use limited-run electric motors as a launch option, following the F5J/K format. Motor runs are limited to 30 seconds for launch only and in contests must be governed using a competition recording altimeter switch specifically designed for this purpose. One popular device is the Aerobtec Altis, which can be found at several RC vendor websites. For recreational flying, you must still adhere to the 30 second launch-only motor run limit but can do so by simply timing the run. Re-start in flight is only allowed in the case of imminent risk.

It must be emphasized – **even though we allow electric motor-assisted launch at Poway, all other forms of powered flight are not permitted.** Accordingly, we have a set of special rules in place for F5J/K at Poway.



As of 2024, the Poway Flight Center is approved as a FAA-Recognized Identification Area (FRIA) with the following dimensions pictured below. RC gliders flying within the FRIA do not have to be equipped with remote ID (RID).



## **9. TPG Contests, Fun-Flys and League of Silent Flight (LSF)**

We typically hold monthly contests for F3K at Poway, winch-launch TD at Encinitas, or F5J at Poway. The best way to stay up to date on the contest schedule is through the contest threads on RC Groups and/or our club calendar on the TPG website. Refer to Section 6 of this document for TPG website and RC Groups forum links.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the contests. We typically have both Sportsman and Open classes, so no matter what skill level you fly at you can be competitive, and contests are a great way to learn new skills. At the end of the year, we award trophies for the top finishers for each discipline and class.

Registration for these events is usually on F3X Vault (<http://www.f3xvault.com>). If you do not already have an account on the Vault you will need to sign up.

TPG holds several fun-fly events at our flying sites each year. Watch the newsletter, web page and Google Group for announcements.

The League of Silent Flight (<https://www.silentflight.org>) has a program recognizing pilot skill extending from entry level to best-of-the-best. Progressing through these levels requires completing various flying tasks of increasing difficulty. TPG periodically holds “LSF Days” to encourage pilots to complete these tasks.

## **10. TPG Bylaws**

The Bylaws define the criteria and rules for becoming a member, and the club management structure, officers, and procedures. The Bylaws are prepared by the Executive Council and approved by a vote of the general membership.

The current Bylaws are posted on the TPG website (<http://www.torreypinesgulls.org>).

## **11. Annual Elections**

All TPG Officers and Coordinators serve a one-year term commencing in January. If you are interested in serving contact any current council member to express your interest. Each October, nominations are opened. TPG Officer and Coordinator elections are held at the annual club meeting each December.

## **12. Disciplinary Procedures**

TPG has a set of rules in place designed to make sure that we all have a safe and enjoyable flying experience. It is critical that all club members follow the rules.

The club Bylaws provide a mechanism to enforce existing safety rules by providing a progressive disciplinary system when needed. Although most infractions can be resolved informally, if a violation is serious or cannot be resolved informally, the Executive Council has the right to issue disciplinary action(s) starting with a review and written reprimand. Subsequent violations can lead to temporary suspension of flight privileges and finally formal expulsion from the club. The council also has discretion to apply more severe disciplinary action as a first step, in proportion to the magnitude (and potential or realized impacts) of the infraction.