BMFA Safety Review Committee (SRC)
Summary of Incident Reports

From April 2026 to October 2026
SRC meeting, 3rd November 2026

This summary covers 41 'Mandatory Occurrence Reports' submitted over a period covering April 2026 to October 2026. This figure is significantly more than experienced in previous periods, but is possibly a reflection of the good weather conditions that were prevalent for much of the summer and also members increased awareness of the reporting system.

These 41 reports are those logged using the BMFA 'mandatory occurrence reporting' system that required onward submission to the AAIB, and represents only a portion of all reports submitted.

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

The AAIB have indicated that they will follow up, as 'report only' (which means no further action) 6 of the incidents reported in this period.

The SRC includes representation from BMFA Staff (including the CEO), the AAIB, the CAA, the BMFA insurance brokers & underwriters, the ASRC and Areas & Tech. 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	None reported	0%
35MHz RC	1	2%
2.4GHz RC	40	98%

Total	41	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 control system.
- **Inconclusive** – insufficient report data, and/or pilot's opinion.
- **Full size*** – Model flyers took correct action, no damage or injury.

Principal Cause	No. of Incidents	Percentage
Pilot error		
Loss of sight – orientation/distance	6	15%
Loss of sight – sun, haze, mist, cloud etc.	3	7%
Inappropriate model for wind strength	5	12%
Mishandling (stall etc.)	9	22%
Pre-flight check oversight	5	12%
Sub Total	***28***	68%
Technical		
Electrical failure / control system	9	22%
Structural failure	1	2.5%
Sub Total	***10***	24.5%

Inconclusive		
Lack of report detail, opinion	1	2.5%
Full size AC at fault*	2	5%
Total	**41**	100%

Model Recovery

Model Recovery	No. of Incidents	Percentage
Recovered	22	54%
Not Recovered	19	46%
Total	41	100%

Third Party Involvement

3rd Party	No. of Incidents	Percentage
3rd Party Involved	5	12%
3rd Party Not involved	12	30%
3rd Party Damage	3	7%
3rd Party Injury	2	5%
Unknown	19	46%
Total	41	100%

Principal Causes

- Mishandling the aircraft (stalling etc.) and equipment/control system failures account for nearly 50 % (approximately 25% each) of all incidents recorded in this period.

- Approximately a quarter of the incidents were simply due to losing sight of the model by flying too far away, across the sun, into cloud, haze, mist, etc., or the pilot being distracted.

- Disappointingly, a number of incidents were due to poor pre-flight checks (controls reversed, battery not secured properly etc.) and hence these were effectively avoidable.

- A proportion of the incidents were caused by the pilot choosing to fly in poor weather conditions, a small lightweight model in strong winds for example, which again makes the incidents preventable.

- A number of incidents involved aircraft with stabilisation enabled, which may have hampered recovery. There were also instances where the stabilisation system may not have been 'initialised' correctly before flight, which possibly lead to the incident. When fitted, pilots need to be competent and confident about operating these systems in flight – basically knowing where the switch is and what each position does!

- An individual's 'fitness to fly' and 'currency', or more specifically lack thereof, may well have been a contributory factor in several of the 'mishandling' incidents.

- Powered fixed wing operations dominate the incidents in this period, but there was no significant correlation of incidents with model type.

- The committee noted that several incidents involved equipment with mis-matched transmitters and receivers (i.e. not the same manufacturer), with some of the receivers being 'budget' items. The former does not comply with BMFA recommendations, and the latter is probably false economy.

Model Recovery

- 46% of the incidents in this report involved models that have **not been recovered.** Thankfully, this represents a decrease compared to previous reports. This is important, as models that aren't recovered cause concerns with the **AAIB**, primarily as there is no information regarding any potential injury to uninvolved individuals and or damage to property.

- In most cases, not recovering the model also means that the cause of the incident may never be known. Please note that the reporting system gives members the option to return to their submission and update their record if the model has been found at a later date.

- We should take every opportunity to encourage members to fit some form of tracking device to their aircraft to aid recovery in the event of a fly-away.

Recommendations

- We should continue to encourage members to fully report incidents, this way more data and trends can be analysed.

- We should encourage members to consider whether the environmental conditions are suitable, **before** they commit to flight, and what actions they will take if something should go wrong. To this end, clubs should actively encourage the use of SWEETS (and SMART) and the other BMFA pre-flight and pre-take-off checks as a routine.

- We should encourage pilots to be mindful about flying within the limits of their ability, in terms of weather conditions and the type of model.

- It may be counter-intuitive, but it is far better to take action to bring the model down nearby, than risk a fly away.

- Encourage those members using stabilisation systems to be fully aware of their characteristic (and limitations) and also to improve their ability to operate them effectively (without taking their eyes off the model!) in flight.

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

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

D R McClure
SRC Chairman
November 2026