

MT. TAMALPAIS FLIGHT RULES AND PROCEDURES

(Rev. January 1, 2026)

Marin County Hang Gliding Association
P.O. Box 785, Mill Valley, CA 94942

IN ADDITION to the rules in this document (“these rules”), pilots are responsible for the information found in the Site Guide at mchga.org/site.shtml (rev. January 1, 2026).

The Marin County Hang Gliding Association (MCHGA) is designated by California State Parks and the County of Marin Department of Open Space through special use permits to administer recreational hang gliding and paragliding activities on Mt. Tamalpais (Mt. Tam). All commercial activities are forbidden under these permits. Each pilot flying this site is expected to uphold and enforce these rules. Any pilot errors made while flying, such as endangering other pilots or spectators or destruction of government or private property, could result in revocation of the County or State use permits, with potential loss of Mt. Tam as a flying site.

1. PILOT QUALIFICATIONS

- a. All pilots must be current members of the United States Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association (USHPA) and have appropriate ratings.
- b. All pilots must agree to follow these rules.
- c. All pilots must fly with an airworthy glider, harness, and gear, including a safety helmet and reserve parachute.
- d. All hang glider (HG) pilots must possess a minimum of USHPA Intermediate (H3) level rating, or a USHPA Novice (H2) level rating and be accompanied by a MCHGA-approved Mt. Tam Instructor. (see: 7. HG Novice Procedures, below.)
- e. All paraglider (PG) pilots must possess a minimum of USHPA Advanced (P4) rating or Intermediate (P3) with completed sponsor sign-off form. A list of authorized sponsors can be found on our [Pilots and Stickers](#) page.
- f. **All pilots must have a current Mt. Tam sticker in their possession and be able and willing to present that sticker to anyone who asks to see it.** It is strongly recommended that pilots attach the sticker on the left side of their helmet to help identify qualified pilots to Park authorities and other pilots.
- g. To obtain a sticker, qualified pilots should follow the detailed instructions found on the [Pilots and Stickers](#) page of our website.

2. PILOT RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Pilots must comply with all State Park and County Beach regulations governing visitor use (parking, littering, overnight camping, etc.)
- b. Pilots are responsible for their own safety and the safety of other pilots and spectators. Each pilot is ultimately responsible for avoiding people in the landing area.
- c. Good judgment is a necessary part of all aviation activities. It requires a thorough knowledge of the limitations of your aircraft, your abilities, and the prevailing conditions (such as sufficient altitude and penetration to cross the houses, etc., and whether your chosen landing zone is dangerously crowded). When deciding whether or not to fly, take all things into consideration.
- d. It is each pilot's responsibility to **uphold and enforce** these rules in cooperation with Park Rangers. Any pilot observing another pilot who is in violation of these rules should inform that pilot of the nature of the violation, and then request compliance. If unsuccessful in gaining compliance, politely inform the pilot that you are obligated to report them to a Park Ranger and club officers. Rangers can be contacted at Pan Toll at (415) 388-2070 or Ranger Dispatch at (916) 358-1300. Also make a verbal report to a club officer.
- e. Any pilot violating these rules or witnessing a violation without intervening 1) may be issued a citation by Park Rangers, 2) may be subject to suspension or revocation of flying privileges at Mt Tam, 3) risks losing their USHPA rating, and 4) risks getting the flying site closed.

3. BEFORE FLYING

- a. Pilots who are new to the site must receive a site intro from a club officer or other authorized pilot before their first flight at Mt. Tam. For a list of authorized pilots, see mchga.org/pilots.shtml.
- b. **All pilots must sign-in with the rangers prior to their first flight of the day.** Sign-ins can be conducted online through a link on the club website: mchga.org/signin. (This link may be saved on a phone for future use.) Alternately, pilots may opt to sign-in on paper using the sign-in box outside the Pantoll Ranger Station kiosk.

4. LAUNCHING

- a. The three designated take-off sites are shown on the attached map as 1, 2, and 3. Launching is allowed only from these sites. Specific GPS coordinates can be found on our [site guide](#). All launches should be witnessed for safety.
- b. PG pilots should not launch when winds are in excess of 15 mph at launch. HG pilots should have an Advanced rated pilot present when winds exceed 15 mph at launch for flying to continue.
- c. When launching, pilots shall ensure that spectators remain clear of the area 30' behind, 50' in front of, and 30 degrees to the sides of the intended launch path/course.
- d. Launching from the back (north or east-facing) side of any launch site is prohibited.
- e. When setting up, pilots should be considerate of others who are also setting up or waiting their turn to set up. When others are waiting and conditions are safe and consistently launchable, pilots who are ready should launch within 15 minutes of completing their set up procedure.

5. FLYING

- a. The Restricted Flying Area, indicated on the attached map, must be observed. Do not fly over the town or cliffs south of the town. Infractions may result in being ticketed and fined by CA State Parks and/or CA Highway Patrol.
- b. There is to be no flying when the landing zone is not visible from launch, or when the cloud ceiling is dangerously low.
- c. There is to be no flying when the landing area is crowded with people (which often happens on warm days or holiday weekends.) The flying site may be closed at the discretion of any State Park Ranger or club officer. However, even if the site has not been closed, no one is allowed to fly if the landing area is too crowded.
- d. Motorized/powered flying is strictly forbidden.
- e. Mini wings and speed wings are currently prohibited from flying at Mt Tam.
- f. No glider shall be flown in any manner which intentionally exceeds its manufacturer's maximum recommended (placard) limits.
- g. No pilot shall intentionally exceed a roll angle of 60 degrees or a pitch angle of +/-30 degrees while west of Highway 1.
- h. Pilots must head out to the landing zone with enough altitude to ensure at least 100' of clearance over the houses along the beach. Watch for changes to wind speed on the ocean as a predictor of ability to penetrate to the beach for safe landing.

6. LANDING ZONE

- a. The landing zone is on the beach at or south of Walla Vista, as indicated on the attached map. All landings must be made south of the Seadrift Beach and north of GGNRA's Stinson Beach Park. When working off excess altitude, do so over the beach or water and not over the houses along the beach.
- b. The first pilot in a group to land should attempt to keep the landing zone clear of spectators for the rest of the group. If beach users are in the landing area, pilots must be prepared to land further south on the beach in a less crowded area.
- c. Pilots should fold and remove their gliders from the LZ as quickly as practical.
- d. Pilots must exit the beach via the Walla Vista public access. All other roads in the area are for home owners/renters only and are not to be used.
- e. Retrieve vehicles should park along Calle del Arroyo in the area south of the Walla Vista alleyway.

7. HG NOVICE PROCEDURES

- a. Novice HG pilots meeting all qualifications outlined above, complete an Application and pay a novice card fee. Novice cards must be in novice pilot's possession when flying Mt. Tam. All Novice flights must be under the supervision of a Tam Instructor. More details on obtaining a Novice Card can be found on our website at mchga.org/pilots.shtml
- b. Prior to a Novice's first flight, the Instructor shall review these rules with the Novice pilot and **provide a standard site intro.**
- c. Both Instructor and Novice pilots must sign in prior to each day of flying.
- d. Instructor shall discuss with Novice the weather conditions, flightpath, etc. for the chosen launch prior to each flight. Novice pilot should launch before Instructor, and ideally following another pilot.
- e. Instructor shall debrief the Novice following each flight, and suggest any improvement(s) in either flight plan or execution as needed.
- f. **Limitations:**
 - 1) Novice pilots must be accompanied by a MCHGA-approved Tam Instructor when flying at Tam.
 - 2) Novice pilots are not allowed to fly Tam on holidays or weekends.
 - 3) There can be only one Novice pilot in the air at a time.
- g. Radio communication is strongly advised.

8. TAM INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS:

- a. All instructors must be a current USHPA-certified Advanced Instructor or Basic Instructor and be approved by the MCHGA Mt. Tam Committee.
- b. All instructors must be Rogallo members of USHPA, and be Certified Non-Commercial (CNC).
- c. Instructors may not accept compensation of any form for their activities at Mt. Tam.
- d. Instructors wishing to apply should contact MCHGA for an application. Approval of any Mt Tam Instructor will be based on their previous flying experience at Mt. Tam, and/or recommendations(s) to the Mt. Tam Committee from applicant's former Instructors.

9. SITE ADVISORIES

- a. High tides and especially King tides can completely cover the landing area and create dangerous risk of being caught in breaking waves.
- b. Even though there might be light winds at launch, there can be strong headwinds and laminar flow near the beach. Always look for wind lines on the water before and during flights from Mt Tam.
- c. In northwest winds, Site #2 sits right behind a rotor. This rotor can sometimes produce a west wind at launch. Even though this appears to be a good direction at launch, you will be launching into a rotor.
- d. In summer months, the landing area can be very crowded (see section 5.c.). Pilots must give other beach users a wide margin, as they are often totally unaware of our landing approach (they might not be looking up).
- e. Post-frontal conditions can be extremely turbulent, especially at higher wind speeds.

10. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

On the mountain, stop any State Park vehicle for assistance or contact Pantoll Ranger Station at (415) 388-2070 or Ranger Dispatch at (916) 358-1300. When on the beach, use the Stinson Beach Fire Department emergency number, (415) 868-1616.

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT FLYING MT. TAM IS OUR PRIVILEGE – NOT OUR RIGHT.
USE COMMON SENSE AND SOUND JUDGMENT AND FLY SAFELY.
GOOD LIFT!**

