

Oahu Hobby Hunter's Field Guide

This checklist is designed for residents and visitors of Oahu who want to navigate the local hobby scene efficiently without wasting time or money. It helps enthusiasts avoid common pitfalls like visiting closed shops, overpaying for shipping, or missing out on exclusive island inventory. Use this list before you launch your next shopping trip to ensure a productive experience.

Phase 1: Pre-Trip Preparation

- **Define your primary goal** Decide if the trip is for specific supplies, browsing for inspiration, or attending a scheduled event.
- **Verify store specialization** Check social media pages to confirm the shop currently stocks your specific interest, such as RC parts or historical models.
- **Confirm current operating hours** Call independent shops to ensure they are open, as local hours can vary significantly from online listings.
- **Calculate your budget** Factor in the "island markup" on goods to avoid sticker shock at the register.
- **Inventory your current supplies** Take photos of your paint rack or parts bin to avoid buying duplicates of items you already own.
- **Measure your display space** Write down the dimensions of your shelving if you plan to purchase large model kits or statues.
- **Scout parking options** Use a map app to locate municipal garages if visiting downtown locations that lack private lots.

Phase 2: On the Ground

- **Check the paint rack first** Inspect the condition and variety of paints immediately to gauge the shop's maintenance standards.
- **Engage with the staff** Ask a specific question about a product to test their expertise and willingness to help.
- **Inspect box condition** Look for sun damage or crushed corners on boxes, which can be common in older island inventory.
- **Ask about "Hawaii Exclusives"** Inquire if the shop holds any limited edition items imported directly from Asia that are not available on the mainland.
- **Request a loyalty card** Ask for a stamp card or points signup immediately to ensure you get credit for your purchase.
- **Hydrate regularly** Keep a water bottle handy, as many shops are small and browsing in the humidity can be draining.

Phase 3: Post-Trip and Maintenance

- **Unbox and inspect immediately** Open your purchase upon returning home to verify all sprues and parts are present and intact.
- **Organize receipts** File your receipts, especially for high-ticket electronics like RC drones, in case warranty service is needed locally.
- **Follow the "Shelf of Shame" protocol** Do not start the new project until your previous one is at least 80% completed.
- **Leave a review** Write a fair review focusing on staff helpfulness and stock variety to support the local business ecosystem.
- **Plan your next visit** Mark the date for the next tournament or workshop you discovered on the shop's bulletin board.