PROP FIRM RULES · AUGUST 2026

Can You Run an Automated Strategy at a Prop Firm?

Apex, Topstep and MyFundedFutures — what each one actually allows.

If you run automated strategies and you're eyeing an evaluation, the most expensive mistake you can make isn't a losing trade. It's passing an eval with a setup the firm's rules didn't allow, and finding out at payout time.

The short answer: most major futures prop firms permit some form of automation, and almost none of them permit *unattended* automation. The safe lane everywhere is **semi-automated trading with you actively watching** — automated entries and exits are broadly fine, walking away from the screen is not.

⚠ The trap nobody warns you about: the eval rules and the funded rules are not always the same rules.

At least one major firm is reported to treat automation differently once you're funded than it does during the evaluation. That is the worst possible place to discover a rule — you have already paid the fee, already passed, and the money is already on the table.

So ask both questions separately, in writing, before you pay: what am I allowed to run during the evaluation, and what am I allowed to run on the funded account?

WHERE THE BIG THREE STAND

	Apex Trader Funding	Topstep	MyFundedFutures
Automation during the evaluation	**Reported allowed** — but confirm	**Allowed** — bots and EAs permitted in the Combine	**Allowed** — algo and third-party tools permitted
Automation on the funded account	**Restricted** — fully autonomous bots reported prohibited on funded accounts; supervised semi-automation permitted	**Allowed** — permitted in funded accounts too	**Allowed** — permitted on funded accounts, with supervision
Unattended / set-and-forget	**No**	**Not the intent**	**No** — active supervision expected, not a lights-out VPS
High-frequency trading	**Prohibited**	**Prohibited** — no latency games, no dozens of orders a second	**Prohibited** — published threshold has been around 200 trades/day
Exploiting the simulated environment	**Prohibited**	**Prohibited**	**Prohibited**
Trading through major news	**Restricted** — your system needs a calendar filter or manual override	Check current rules	Check current rules
Do you have to tell them you're automating?	Check current rules	Check current rules	**No notification required**
Who owns the bot's mistakes	You do — at every firm. Topstep states plainly that it will not set up or troubleshoot your automation. Nobody eats your bot's losses.		

How this was compiled. From each firm's published policy summaries as of **August 2026**. Prop firm automation rules change often — MyFundedFutures reversed its position in 2025 — and published summaries sometimes disagree with each other. Treat this as a starting point for your questions, **not** as a substitute for the firm's own current help centre. Where this sheet says "reported," sources differ and you should confirm directly.

WHY THEY RESTRICT IT AT ALL

Three reasons, and they're fair ones. Evaluation accounts fill on simulated data, so a system built to exploit sim quirks would pass an eval on an edge that doesn't exist in a live market. Firms want traders, not server farms — one person running forty unattended accounts off one signal isn't what the funding model is priced for. And a runaway algo in a funded account is a genuine liability.

Understand those three and every rulebook reads the same way: **automation that behaves like a disciplined human trader is broadly tolerated. Automation that behaves like a bot farm is not.**

WHAT "ACTIVE OVERSIGHT" MEANS DAY TO DAY

- ☐ **You start it deliberately each session.** It does not run around the clock.
- ☐ **You can see it and flatten it.** If it's in a trade, you're at a platform where you can intervene manually.
- ☐ **You make the risk calls.** News days, a slumping strategy, flat by session close — yours, even when execution is automated.
- ☐ **You can explain every trade.** "It took its opening-range entry at the break, I was watching, I moved the stop up manually" is an answer no firm has a problem with.

BEFORE YOU PAY FOR AN EVALUATION — FIVE THINGS TO CONFIRM

- ☐ Is automation allowed **during the evaluation**? Get it in writing.
- ☐ Is automation allowed **on the funded account**? Ask separately. This is where people get caught.
- ☐ What's the **trade-frequency ceiling**, and does your strategy come anywhere near it?
- ☐ Are there **news-event restrictions**, and does your system have a calendar filter or an override?
- ☐ What does the firm consider **"supervised"**? Their definition, not yours.

Every one of those is a two-minute email to support. Send it before the fee, not after — and keep the reply.

Want to see how an automated strategy behaves against eval targets before you spend anything?

My Prop Firm Analyzer is free to drive on my site — it's loaded with my own current backtest data, so you can see how a strategy runs into profit targets and drawdown limits without paying an eval fee to find out. And if you want to know how I keep my own strategies inside these rules, that's on the site too.

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— Crystal Curry, TurnKey Futures Strategies

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